

**H I S T O R Y**

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**T H E**  
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**O F T H E**  
**Marquis de C R E S S Y.**

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HISTOIRY

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of the

THE

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OF THE

Marquis de Cressy

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**Translated from the FRENCH.**

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**L O N D O N:**

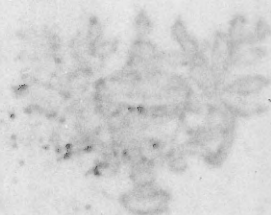
**Printed for T. BECKET, and P. A. DE  
HONDT in the Strand, and J. BALFOUR  
in Edinburgh.**

**MDCC LXV.**

THE  
HISTORY  
OF THE  
Marquis of Evers.



Translated by



L O N D O N :

Printed for T. Beckert, and F. A. de  
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MDCCLXX.

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[ 8 ]

T H E  
H I S T O R Y  
O F T H E  
Marquis de CRESSY.

**T**HE Marshal Duke de L—— having gloriously ended the war in —— returned to court, followed by a crowd of illustrious youths who partook with him the honour of those victories that great commander had obtained. Amongst those who had distinguished themselves under him, the Marquis de Cressy, by the particular friendship of the Marshal who loved him, had frequent opportunities of shewing what zeal, courage, and fortitude can perform in the heart of a Frenchman. How happy if such

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noble

noble qualities had flowed from the love of his country, and that generous emulation natural to great minds !

THE Marquis had entered into his twenty-eighth year, when he appeared anew at court after six years absence. He was master of himself, rich enough, had his desires been moderate ; but governed by ambitious motives, the wealth of his ancestors was not sufficient to support the figure he assumed ; his thoughts were wholly employed how to continue, and even to heighten it ; a noble birth, a charming person, a thousand agreeable talents, an easy temper, an engaging air, a false heart, a great deal of craft, the art of concealing his own vices, and discovering the foibles of others, were the foundation of his hopes : and they were not unpromising. Such characters almost always succeed. The appearance of  
virtue



virtue is more attractive than virtue itself; and he who pretends to have it, has many advantages over him who is really possessed of it. The Marquis de Cressy soon became the admiration of both sexes: the men sought to gain his friendship, the women to win his affections; but those who endeavoured to engage him, found one barrier in his heart difficult to force. Of all passions, interest is least accessible to the attacks of pleasure.

THE Marquis long resisted the pleasures that were offered him, however flattering to his vanity. The envied title of a happy man, touched him less than the hopes of an alliance, which his prudence might procure him. Without discovering his designs, his indifference was obvious; the little success they had, soon repulsed those women who only sought to please; but the difficulty animated those

whose tenderness of heart, and timid desires, regulated by decency, appeared worthy to vanquish the indifference of a man who seemed formed to render her happy who could touch his heart.

MADAME the Countess de Raifel, and Mademoiselle du Bugei, were amongst the last. The Countess had been two years the widow of a husband she could never love, whose advanced age and peevish humours taught nothing of marriage but its disgusts, and might have determined her to a life of liberty. She was almost twenty-six, her stature was tall and majestic, her eyes full of fire and spirit, her open countenance indicated the nobleness and candour of her mind; goodness, sweetness, generosity, formed her character; incapable of disguise herself, she was without suspicion. It was not easy to gain

gain her friendship ; but when once she loved, she loved so tenderly, that nothing less than meriting her hatred could restore her to indifference. An illustrious birth and a princely fortune were the least advantages such a woman as Madame de Raifel could offer to the happy man she designed to chuse.

ADELAIDE du Bugei was just sixteen ; all the graces and the bloom of youth adorned her face and person ; her mind, naturally quick and penetrating, had nevertheless those inexpressible charms which innocence and truth bestow. She had lost her mother. M. du Bugei, who tenderly loved her, had just brought her home from Chelles where she had been educated. Although her fortune was not great, most of her father's depending on benefactions he received from the king, yet the antiquity of her family, the services it had

done the state, her own beauty and merit, might have promised her a very different fate from that to which love and interest made her an unhappy victim.

SUCH were the two persons M. de Cressy inspired with the first sentiments of love they had ever known. They were related, and friendship besides united them; but the difference of their ages did not allow of that intimacy between them which banishes all reserve. The Countess kept her secret from prudence, and Madame du Bugei knew not she had one to confide.

M. DE Cressy met oftener with Adelaide than the Countess; he was almost every day in a house where she was intimate. He observed the confusion his presence gave her. He felt a secret pleasure in discovering the impres-



impression he had made on a heart so simple and sincere; but he was far from confining his ambition to such a fortune as hers, and therefore rejected at first all thoughts of taking advantage of Adelaide's sentiments in his favour: But time, vanity, desire, perhaps love, overthrew this prudent resolution, and offered him a way of indulging the inclination Madame du Bugei had discovered, without changing the plan he had formed for his own advancement.

Thus concealing from every eye the new sentiments he felt, he affected to pay her no marks of distinction which might betray them, and confined himself to those services alone which might discover his tenderness to herself. This conduct produced the effect he expected: Adelaide believed she was beloved; her heart, already prepossessed, was by de-

grees inflamed; and her passion became so powerful, that the perfidy and ingratitude of the Marquis could not afterwards extinguish it, or make him less dear to her.

MADAME de Gerfay, at whose house Adelaide and the Marquis met so frequently, was sister to the late Count de Raifel; nevertheless she did not visit his widow, with whom she had gone to law, about some claims very ill founded, as it appeared. But as she judged otherwise, and the affair was but lately decided, her resentment still subsisted. This accident was the reason why Madame de Raifel and Adelaide never once discovered they were rivals.

THE house where M. du Bugei lived had a garden, one of the doors of which opened on a publick walk. M. de Cressy prevailed on Adelaide to take advantage of this to facilitate their meeting in the evenings.

the

The fine weather just then beginning made these walks very natural; she could not imagine there was any danger in granting him this favour; she came from home attended by a governess, who easily yielded to the desires of her young pupil, without foreseeing the perils to which they exposed her. M. de Cressy availing himself of the advantages experience and art gave him over her, by continually increasing the flame, brought her at length to confess all the tenderness she felt for him: a dangerous confession, the truth of which a lover always disputes, till that moment when from proof to proof he has extorted one, after which doubt is removed and desire flies.

MEAN while Madame de Raifel, who did not find reason oppose her inclinations ardently wished to attach the Marquis. The  
reserve

reserve of her sex, and her natural modesty, would not permit her to make the first advances; and although her intentions might have justified her, yet she feared to take the least step. She thought it shameful to employ the mediation of a friend, and to purchase by a kind of meanness a happiness she would blush to have so obtained; and which would be continually disturbed by the uncertainty she would be in, as to the motives that had determined M. de Cressy to request her hand. Her heart was too delicate to owe any thing to fortune; she sought after a happiness more precious than what satisfies the desires of ordinary minds: It was the delights of mutual tenderness; of an union, the bonds of which, formed by love, friendship, and esteem, would every day render more indissoluble.

THE



THE Marquis, how great soever his ambition, did not pretend to aspire to Madame de Raifel, who had just refused a proposal, after which it seemed vain for any one to make offers; he was far from imagining he was happy enough to please her; when by chance the Countess and he met, the fear she was under of letting somewhat that might discover her passion escape, gave her an air of reserve and uneasiness, little adapted to attract him who loved gaiety extremely. Madame de Raifel, charming every where but in his company, lost wherever she saw him that vivacity which made her so amiable, and gave a grace to all she did; she was either silent, or what she said was so ordinary, that the Marquis, displeased at the seriousness of her manner, had almost a dislike to her.

WHILST Adelaide abandoned herself to the seducing charms of a passion the sweets of which

which were undisturbed; whilst Madame de Raifel, every day more enamoured, indulged a tenderness that ingrossed all her thoughts, the Marchioness d'Elmont, inspired by vanity, or perhaps some motive less excusable, undertook to vanquish the indifference of M. de Cressy, or if she could not inspire him with love, at least to engage him in that sort of commerce where caprice and liberty, taking the place of sentiment, divest love of all those pleasing illusions which support it, degrade it to an inclination in which the heart has no share, and which produces less pleasure than regret. Madame d'Elmont was one of those women, who possessing none of the virtues of their own sex, foolishly adopt the vices of the other, which they pretend to imitate. Thus in the place of solidity and judgment, they substitute impudence and licentiousness; abandoning

abandoning themselves to the depravity of their imaginations, honour themselves with the name of men, because unworthy of that of virtuous women; they have dared to renounce that reserve, that modesty, that delicacy of sentiment, which ought peculiarly to distinguish their sex.

SUCH was the person who took an inclination for M. de Cressy, and it was not long before she discovered the design she had to engage him; but as an affair of this nature was neither suitable to his views, or the real situation of his heart, it was absolutely rejected; he pretended to be ignorant of the Marchioness's intentions, and carefully avoided her; while he paid all the respect due to her sex and rank, he well knew how to elude her pursuits, and defend himself against her attacks.

MADAME

MADAME d'Elmont's pride, and the high opinion she had of herself, persuaded her that the man who could resist the advances she had made, was not so much defended by indifference, as already fixed by some secret and successful amour. Full of this idea, and guided by spite and curiosity, she observed the Marquis's behaviour, set spies to watch all his motions, and was not long in discovering that Madame du Bugei was the object of his tenderness: Thus looking on her as the only obstacle to her wishes, she resolved to disturb an intrigue which she believed much farther advanced than it really was, and deprive Adelaide of a happiness she herself wished so ardently to possess.

As the actions of men are obvious, though we rarely discover the motives that produce them, so there are many occasions in life where malice and revenge easily put on the appearance



appearance of justice and probity. Madame d'Elmont, informed of Adelaide's frequent walks, and how constantly the Marquis accompanied her, wrote to M. du Bugei, to inform him that a young lord who belonged to the court had every evening a rendezvous with his daughter. Thus concealing her jealousy and meanness, under the guise of friendship for M. du Bugei, she pierced the heart of Adelaide with the first distress she had yet felt. It was not enough to hear the reproaches of an enraged father, to receive his positive command never more to see the object of her love, by discovering to her where this secret intercourse might end, she was taught to fear this lover, already too dear to her, had not for her that respect and tenderness she so well merited from him.

MADAME du Bugei was incapable of denying a truth her confusion too plainly discovered; a sincere confession of all that had passed between her and the Marquis extremely embarrassed M. du Bugei. M. de Cressy had said nothing that could discover his real sentiments; he had neither made offers nor asked favours, and his expressions were so guarded, they gave little light to his designs; it was only plain that Adelaide loved, and believed she was beloved. M. du Bugei esteemed the Marquis, and earnestly wished his daughter's happiness; he resolved to oblige M. de Cressy to declare himself; and not chusing to appear in the affair, dictated the following billet to Adelaide, who wrote it without daring to dispute.

THE honour you have done me, Monsieur, in favouring me so often with your company, has been remarked by some people, who from  
thence

thence take occasion to believe me imprudent. Accuse me neither of whim nor unpoliteness, if I change my conduct towards you, and avoid for the future all conversation with you in public or private, at least till my father authorizes me to see you. If you do not engage him yourself to allow me this, forget me for ever.

SHE wept so bitterly while she wrote, that her father, affected with the tears he saw her shed, stepped towards a balcony, and leaned on it to conceal his emotion. Adelaide, who judged of the pain her lover would feel by what she suffered, without reflecting she had placed happiness within his reach, thought only of the loss of those interviews that charmed her so much ; and seizing that moment, unobserved by her father, wrote these words on a bit of paper :

B

" To

" To bid you forget me ? Ah never ! They  
 " have forced me to write : nothing can  
 " oblige me to think or desire it."

SHE slid this paper into her letter, and closed it hastily : it was immediately dispatched ; and she expected the answer with all the inquietude that fear and love can occasion in a heart into which doubts have been infused of the dear object of its wishes.

M. DE Cressy was abroad when the billet was brought ; he had sought for Adelaide all the evening, and was surprized neither to see her at Madame de Gerfay's, nor in the garden ; he could not imagine why she had missed their usual rendezvous. It was two o'clock in the morning before he returned ; the letter which was brought, surprized and vexed him ; he easily discovered the author ;



but he was penetrated with so tender an emotion in reading the bit of paper, on which he found so convincing a proof of Adelaide's love, that he was tempted to sacrifice all his schemes of wealth and grandeur, to the charms of that sincere happiness he would find in the possession of an amiable maid who adored him.

He could not conceal from himself that time had not lessened Adelaide's attachment; that it might not have become so irresistible, had he not strengthened it by his assiduities, by the preference he shewed her; in short, by persuading her that he loved her with ardour. While he reflected with concern on the pain his refusal would occasion her on the reproaches she might so justly make, he felt at the bottom of his heart that sentiment of truth and justice nature imprints there, that

tears from our errors the veil with which self-love conceals them, makes us blush at our faults, and seek to reform them ; a sentiment which perhaps would direct us more securely than the studied researches of reason, were we able to hear its voice, and follow its dictates. What a pleasing image offered itself to M. Cressy, if sacrificing ambition to tenderness, duty, love, he had filled the bosom of Adelaide with a joy whose transports he would have partaken ! What pleasure to read in the eyes of her we love the sweet satisfaction we have diffused there ! What happiness is equal to the certainty of having filled up those engagements a generous mind owes to itself !

He represented to himself a pleasing image of this felicity, but could not resolve to purchase it at the price of all his hopes. He passed the night in violent agitations ; but at length

length love and desire yielding to ambition (the unconquerable bias of his heart) he wrote the following answer to Mademoiselle du Bugei.

MADemoISELLE,

**N**OTHING can console me for having been the innocent cause why any one has dared to blame the conduct of a person so respectable as you: I shall always approve of whatever you do, without thinking myself intitled to ask your reasons. How happy should I be, Mademoiselle, if my fortune, and the measures it obliges me to take, did not deprive me of the delightful hopes of an honour, which my respect and my sentiment perhaps merit, but which my present situation does not permit me to aspire to?

I have the honour to be, &c.

*a villain*  
B 3

THIS

THIS letter was delivered to M. du Bugei, in consequence of the orders he had given. As he had other views for his daughter, which nothing but the desire he had to satisfy her could make him alter, he looked on the Marquis's excuse as a happy method of following his first intentions, without contradicting Adelaide's inclinations. He did not imagine love had made an impression so difficult to efface; he looked on her attachment as a warm, but momentary passion, which time and dissipation would easily conquer. The favourable opinion he had of M. de Cressy's character, would not permit him to believe he had formed the horrid design of seducing her. He thought a girl without experience might easily deceive herself, and mistake for love those polite marks of attention, and those flattering compliments, which galantry has rendered customary in the  
gay



gay world. M. du Bugel was a man of probity and honour ; qualities which always incline one to judge favourably of the conduct of others.

He ordered his daughter to be called, and giving her the letter he had just received : It belongs to you, Mademoiselle, to determine, said he, how far M. de Cressy's conduct is blameable with respect to you. If he said he loved you, he has deceived you, and you have in your hands a convincing proof of it. At your age one is easily duped ; but let this mistake undeceive you, and teach you to avoid for the future whatever may betray you into the like errors. I will not, continued he, add to the pain I see you feel, by a more severe remonstrance. I excuse your weakness, provided you do not indulge it, and render yourself worthy of my future favour by a

more exact conduct. You are dear to me, Adelaide ; you know I love you ; but I cannot promise to preserve my tenderness for you, if you are weak enough to abandon yourself to an inclination you ought to blush you ever indulged.

MADemoiselle du Bugei was in no condition to reply ; her heart, overwhelmed with sorrow, had no room for other sentiments ; tears ran down her face, and bathed the fatal letter that had just destroyed her happiness, and darkened all her prospects : she fell at M. du Bugei's feet, and besought him to permit her to pass a few days at Chelles. She wished, at present, for nothing but freedom to afflict herself without restraint. M. du Bugei consented more readily, as he hoped the pleasure of visiting again the companions of her childhood would restore peace to her heart,

heart, and banish from it the remembrance of the Marquis de Cressy.

THE governess was dismissed, and her place supplied by a new chambermaid, who attended Adelaide to Chelles. The key of the garden door was deposited in M. du Bugui's apartment. While he thanked Madame d'Elmont for her information, he took care to engage her to secrecy; and as it was nobody's interest to divulge the affair, it was buried in silence. M. de Cressy learnt Adelaide's retreat from a servant of his, who was related to the chambermaid who attended her. Her departure affected him: in the long conversations they had had together, M. de Cressy was too well acquainted with Adelaide's sentiments, to doubt of the pain it would give her. He knew her pride was equal to her tenderness. When he called to  
mind

mind all he had said to her, and his conduct, after so many assurances of a passion she had no reason to doubt, he believed she would despise him ; that he must be the object of her scorn, perhaps her hatred ; he who had been so of her tenderest regard, and the fondest wishes of her heart. Without any intention to repair his faults, he wished to lessen them in Adelaide's eyes ; he undertook to justify so cruel a procedure ; and seizing an opportunity chance presented of conveying a letter to her, he resolved to write ; but how ? What was it possible for him to say after what he had done ? What excuse can be accepted by a heart deceived in its fondest hopes ? What satisfy one whose judgment is too just to be imposed on a second time ? There are certain characters whose noble simplicity embarrasses art itself in its own devices : it is impossible to impose upon them, unless



unless by abusing truth, in order to seduce them. M. de Cressy thought that a sincere confession would restore him to Adelaide's esteem, perhaps to her tenderness, and therefore determined to write to her as follows:

**I**S it permitted to a wretch, who has deprived himself of happiness, to implore your pardon and your pity? Never did love kindle a purer or more ardent flame, than that which burnt in my heart for the amiable Adelaide. Why was I not allowed to give those proofs of it she had a right to expect? Ah, Mademoiselle! how could I dare to unite your destiny to that of an ambitious man, all of whose wishes you perhaps could not satisfy? Who even in possessing you, although master of a treasure so dear and precious, might yet regret those enjoyments, less worthy

no

no doubt, but which he is accustomed to regard with desire and hope. I confess to you a shameful weakness, which makes me contemptible to myself, which I wish to conquer; who can so powerfully assist me to do so as yourself? Yet I dare not promise myself success. Pity, but do not despise me; let me not sink under your displeasure. May a generous compassion yet interest you for a man you once esteemed, who adores you, who loses you, and detests himself.

THIS letter was delivered at Chelles to Mademoiselle du Bugei, by her maid, who made no mention from whence it came, and seemed ignorant of how much consequence it was to her mistress.

ADELAIDE had read the first she received from M. de Cressy too often not to know his hand;

hand ; she opened it with violent emotions ; and so great was her confusion, that it was not till after she had read it several times, that she knew what it contained. Such tender expressions, so extraordinary a secret discovered, affected her at first ; but, on farther reflection, contempt was the only sentiment she felt for the man who could prefer interest to the love he professed. Tears of regret and indignation escaped from her eyes. Ah ! what does he demand, cried she ? Of what consequence to him is my friendship or my hatred ? Ah, good God ! which of us ought most to excite compassion ? Peaceful, happy, before I listened to his false professions, I tasted a pleasure in loving him whose sweetness was without alloy. To see him, filled me with delight ; it satisfied my innocent wishes. My love, unknown to him, unknown even to myself, was a pleasure so  
sweet,

sweet, so perfect. Ah ! why has he deprived me of it ? Why has he acquainted me with another, since he must ravish it from me ? I know, continued she. Ah ! how cruel are the men ! They love to nourish in our hearts the poison they themselves shed there ; and love would never give us pain, were not the object of it unworthy of the sentiments it inspires.

SHE interrupted her reflections to peruse the letter anew, and weigh every expression ; she seemed to search for what she wished in vain to find. Her maid came to inform her, that her answer or her orders were expected. Adelaide considered some moments ; she was doubtful what she ought to do ; but all at once resolving, Go, said she to her maid, and let him know, who dares expect an answer from me, that my first letter contained  
all



all I shall ever have to say to him. While Mademoiselle du Bagci yielded to the dictates of a just indignation, she believed she had gained a victory over herself; she was charmed to find she had strength enough to resist the desire she had to write to the Marquis. While she concealed her tenderness, she imagined she triumphed over it: but the constraints imposed on love do not weaken it; and in a tender heart, really subdued, time, even reflection itself, continually leading it to the object of its love, insensibly lessens the cause of its complaints, or at least places it a distance; and in some happy moment, represents in the most favourable light all that can extenuate his guilt. M. de Cressy's apparent frankness produced the effect he expected: Adelaide ceased to despise him; his ambition appeared less culpable; and it was not long ere a melancholy regret of her own  
want

want of power to bestow upon him all the blessings he aspired after, alone possessed her heart.

WHILE she was afflicting herself at Chelles, while the Marquis continued to write to her, and she was resolute in making him no returns, and while she bewailed her father's orders, who pressed her to return home, a magnificent entertainment was preparing at court, which was to conclude with a ball. Adelaide, and Mademoiselle de C. as a particular mark of distinction, were to accompany thither the young princesses of . . .

ALL the ladies appointed to dance, were busy in chusing those ornaments which would best set off their charms. Madame de Raifel had given orders for a set of jewels she was this day to appear in ; she was herself at the  
tire-

tire-woman's, who was to provide a dress for her, in order to make choice of what diamonds she would have fixed on the sleeves, on the neck, and on the clasps, to adorn her habit. While she was thus busied, a scarf was returned to the tire-woman, about which she had made some mistake. A gold one was asked, and in the hurry of her affairs she had made a silver one. Madame de Raifel examined the scarf, and found it so handsome, so rich, and done with so much taste, that she could not resist the desire she had to purchase it. On her return home, after having combated for some time an inclination this scarf inspired, she yielded to the pleasure of indulging it; she wrote to M. de Cressy a billet, and sent with it the scarf, at a time when she was certain he was not at home, by a man out of livery, who could not be known to belong to her. M. de Cressy received this

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magnificent scarf in the evening, but gave much less attention to it than the billet which accompanied it, where he found these words :

**A** TENDER, timid passion, fearful of discovery, interests me in the secrets of your heart ; you are thought to be indifferent ; you seem to me insensible ; perhaps you are happy and discreet. Condescend to inform me of the situation of your mind, and be assured I merit this confidence ; if you love no one, wear at the ball the scarf I send you : this complaisance may perhaps conduct you to a lot many envy. She who inclines to prefer you to all your sex is worthy of your cares ; she is worthy of them in all respects ; and the step she has taken to inform you of it, is the first weakness with which she can reproach herself.

THIS



THIS billet disturbed M. de Cressy; he recollected all the women who had ever shewn an inclination for him, but endeavoured in vain to discover who was the author of it. Of all the women of his acquaintance Madame de Raifel was the only one he never thought of. At last, in spite of all appearances to the contrary, he positively believed that this was one of Madame d'Elmonte's pleasantries. He determined therefore not to wear the scarf, and thought no more of it.

WHEN the day of the ball arrived, the Marquis felt an extreme pleasure in the hopes of seeing Adelaide again; he could not believe a love once so tender could be already extinguished; he thought it only a little cooled, and flattered himself that his presence would animate it anew, and procure

his pardon, could he speak to her. He was resolved to sacrifice nothing to her, yet he could not deprive himself of the satisfaction of being beloved. Amongst a crowd of noble youths, adorned with all the splendour magnificence can bestow, the Marquis de Cressy was so graceful, so distinguished by his air and dress, so formed to eclipse all around him, that the instant he appeared, he attracted the eyes, and gained the suffrages of all.

ADELAIDE was dancing when he entered ; a whisper which arose made her easily discover it was he ; she cast down her eyes, and durst no more lift them, afraid of meeting his. Her disorder was so great she could hardly continue the dance ; and when she finished, the order she received to take him out, affected

fects her so much, she was forced to beg to be excused : her agitation was so visible, they were obliged to lead her into a saloon, to give her freedom to recover her scattered spirits.

WHEN she returned, the Marquis fixed his eyes on her with an air of concern, which did not escape Madame d'Elmonte's notice, beside whom he sat ; she was just rallying him with so much sharpness, that he could not refrain from answering her with somewhat of the same spirit.

MADAME de Raifel was near enough to hear what passed ; she was vexed to observe that the Marquis did not wear the scarf she had sent him. She discovered by somewhat he said to Madame d'Elmonte, that he sus-

pected that lady was the person who had wrote to him : she rose to interrupt a conversation that displeased her ; and approaching the Marchioness, addressed herself to her, to oblige her to break off the discourse she had begun. The Marquis, who was tired with Madame d'Elmonte, was so charmed with the service Madame de Raifel had done him, that for the first time he beheld her with attention.

SHE was this evening so lovely, her air so noble and engaging, that it was impossible to see her, without confessing she was formed to inspire respect and love : she rallied the Marchioness on the bad humour she had shewn, bantered M. de Cressy as the occasion of it, and discovered so much wit and spirit in this little pleasantry, that the Marquis was  
astonished



astonished how he had seen her so often without knowing how agreeable she was.

BUT all he wished for was to approach Adelaide ; and notwithstanding her endeavours to avoid him, he at length found an opportunity of placing himself beside her. He spoke for some time without her deigning to reply, or seeming to notice what he said : this contemptuous silence piqued the Marquis extremely ; he told her, she either affected indifference then, or had deceived him when she permitted him to believe his sentiments had touched her. I never deceived you, answered Mademoiselle du Bugei, but time and circumstances change the disposition of our hearts ; if mine are changed, you have no reason to complain : nevertheless, as I do not know who informed my father of a conduct

with which I reproach myself, you will oblige me if you leave me. The noble indignation with which she pronounced these words, disconcerted M. de Cressy; he wanted to continue the discourse, but she rose without listening to him, and placed herself elsewhere. This coldness and contempt affected the Marquis more than love had ever done; he thought without Adelaide, without her tenderness, no peace, no happiness remained for him. He was torn with regret at having offended her; he resolved to recover her affections whatever it might cost; and leaving the ball as soon as with decency he could, he flew home to write to her, resolved to send his letter that very night.

MADemoiselle du Bugei could not help observing the Marquis's motions; she saw the effect her indifference had produced;

but,

but, far from rejoicing at the pain she had occasioned, she felt a real grief herself the moment he retired. Madame de Raifel saw her sorrow, and demanded the cause of it with so tender a solicitude, that Adelaide, deeply affected, let fall some tears. The Countess gently reproached her with having neglected her for some months past, and pressing her to her bosom, let her understand, that she suspected love was the cause of her distress. This is neither a time nor place to intrust you with the cause of my emotions, replied Mademoiselle du Bugei; but when I return from Gersey, where I shall pass some days, I will request your indulgence and advice. Madame de Raifel promised her all the assistance she could expect from a zealous and sincere friend; they continued talking together till the princess, who was retiring, ordered Adelaide to be informed,

ted, who was glad to have a place where she was not at liberty to reflect on what alone engrossed all her attention.

IN using M. de Cressy so severely she had listened only to the dictates of duty ; but the steps which reason obliges us to take, are not always the most agreeable to the heart.

HARDLY had Adelaide entered her apartment, and begun perhaps to regret her haughtiness, when Elenor her maid brought a letter which had just come from the Marquis : she opened it eagerly, and read the following :

**Y**OU punish me too severely, Mademoiselle ;  
 I must say you punish me too severely ;  
 however guilty I may appear, you carry your  
 resentment too far. So much disdain from  
 a mind



a mind so gentle as yours, is the assured proof of a contempt I cannot support. No, charming Adelaide, your unhappy lover cannot live and be the object of your hatred. Ah ! restore me to your former goodness ! set any value on this precious blessing ; every thing will seem easy to obtain it ! But dare I hope for the happiness once offered me ? Shall I be permitted to request it ? Will it be granted me ? Yes, if you desire it. Consent to speak to me ; I have a thousand things to talk of ; your lips must pronounce my pardon ; they must assure me that you do not hate me ; nay, that you love me still ; do not refuse this petition from the tenderest, the most passionate of lovers, and the most penitent that ever lived ; deign to regulate his future life ; his fate is in your hands : Ah ! what will he not sacrifice to convince you he adores you !

WITH ]

WITH what joy did the tender Adelaide receive these flattering assurances of a change so little hoped for or expected ! Elenor's presence could not suppress her transports : Ah, what have I read ! cried she : have not my eyes deceived me ? Is it possible, that recovered from the fatal ambition that tore him from me, he has indeed resolved to sacrifice it to his love ? What ! shall every moment of my future life be spent with him ? Will he for ever love me ? May I confess that I love, that I adore him ? Shew to all the world those sentiments I have been told I ought to blush at, that it was shameful to indulge, and painful to suppress ? Ah ! what a fate, what a happy fate is that which will for ever unite us ! Enchanted by those pleasing ideas, Mademoiselle du Bugei wrote as follows :

NO,

NO, I do not, I never could hate you ; my duty, and the obedience I owed to my father's commands, could only oblige me to withdraw from you the appearance of my friendship. If my esteem, if my reliance on you are necessary to the happiness of your life, you know how you may for ever assure yourself of them. I have promised, my word is engaged neither to see you or speak with you ; I will not abuse the indulgence of a father, who has pardoned me with so much goodness ; and what could I say to you in the interview you demand ? Of what importance, whether my mouth pronounce your pardon if my heart grants it, if my hand leaves you no room to doubt you have already obtained it ? If indeed you love me, think there is only one proof of your tenderness which you can offer Adelaide.

ELENOR

ELENOR took the care of delivering this billet to M. de Cressy ; and Mademoiselle du Bugei, after reading his a thousand times, went at length to rest, with more tranquillity than she had done for some time past. The maid who waited on Adelaide, was one of those mercenary souls who are governed wholly by interest ; who see no farther into the consequence of those intrigues in which chance or necessity has engaged them, than the profits they may draw from them, without troubling themselves about what is too often the result of their enterprizes. Gained over by M. de Cressy, she served him with zeal, and his liberality entirely attached her to him. While she delivered Adelaide's billet to him, she gave an exact recital of the joy his had occasioned. The Marquis was fired with this detail, he burnt with impatience to see Mademoiselle du Bugei : He complained



to Eleanor of her mistress's refusal; he seemed so affected with it, that the girl, who doubted not he would reward her generously, if she could procure him a pleasure he so ardently longed for, offered to introduce him the same evening into the garden, and convinced him how easily this might be effected. She had observed where M. du Bugei kept the key of that door which opened to the public garden, which she could easily get possession of during the day, unlock the door, and replace it again without being observed. M. du Bugei went early to rest, and his daughter usually walking very late, M. de Cressy might pass some hours with her unsuspected.

He accepted this proposal with transport, gave her a letter for her mistress, filled with the tenderest protestations of eternal love, and the warmest assurances that he would convince  
her

her of his sincerity, by the most public and undoubted proofs. Elenor, who was satisfied with his acknowledgments, left him, after having concerted what hour he should be at the garden door, and on the signal she would make to inform him of the moment when he might appear.

M. DE Cressy passed all next day full of impatience for the happy time that was to introduce him to Adelaide ; he thought of nothing but the pleasure he would feel in hearing her once more talk to him with that sweetness and ingenuity that had charmed him so much. Mademoiselle du Bugei triumphed in his heart over all that had opposed her charms ; the happiness of loving her, of pleasing her, formed his only ambition ; he could not imagine what blindness had made him neglect so precious a blessing ; and nothing

thing when compared with her, with her love, with the certainty of being the object of it, of her preferable regard, seemed to him worthy of regret.

AT last the clock struck eleven; he went to the place of rendezvous, he approached the door softly, and heard two persons talking within; this gave him some uneasiness: he listened, and soon discovered it was Adelaide and Elenor; he therefore waited in silence till this last should give him the appointed signal: a branch of a tree cast over the wall informed him he might enter; the door needed only to be pushed open, he shut it again as he had found it, and approached the place where Adelaide wished perhaps, but did not expect to see him.

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THE

THE moon shone so bright, that Madame du Bugei knew the Marquis instantly; surprise, confusion, pain mingled with joy, and inquietude for some time deprived her of all power of utterance; she blamed Elenor, she was afraid to hear her lover; the Marquis, already on his knees, would not quit one of her hands which he held between his till she had pronounced his pardon. The amiable Adelaide yielded to the gentleness of her heart; she wept, and the tears love drew from her eyes were the seal of the pardon so earnestly desired. What vows of eternal love followed this sweet reconciliation! what pleasure did Adelaide feel in hearing them! Notwithstanding, she was not willing he should continue long with her, she pressed him to retire; but Elenor joining with him to beg a longer interview, she at last consented;

but



but fearing they might be observed from some of the apartments, they agreed to go into the public garden, which at this hour was shut, and where they were certain of meeting nobody.

ADELAIDE trembled every step; but assured at length, and losing every idea but those which love inspired, she walked a long while leaning on M. de Cressy, who, charmed to find himself near her and in so much freedom, talked to her with an ardour sufficient to make her forget the world and herself. They advanced towards a piece of water that terminated a parterre. Adelaide sat down on the flowery turf which bordered it, the Marquis placed himself by her side, and Elenor who had followed them walked at a little distance.

THEIR conversation became animated; Adelaide had already forgot she had any reproaches to make; hope and joy banished all remembrance of her lover's faults, she thought only on the pleasure of seeing and hearing him.

THE profound silence that reigned in this place, the fineness of the night, the odours which exhaled from the flowers, the coolness of the air, too sultry during the day, the solitude they were in, the negligence of Adelaide's dress, who was carelessly wrapt in a slight robe, which the least breath of wind blew aside, her head without ornaments, her neck half uncovered, fired the Marquis by degrees with those desires so ardent, so impetuous, so difficult to be suppressed, when the opportunity he had of satisfying them still augmented the empire sense had usurped over reason.

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THE

THE joy he saw in Madame du Bugei's eyes, the mildness with which she listened to him, the emotions he saw on her countenance when he pressed her hand, or dared to lift it to his lips, kindled so ardent a desire in his bosom, he could no longer restrain his transports. He threw his arms round Adelaide, and tenderly pressing her to his heart, imprinted on her lips one of those kisses which awake voluptuousness and love. Adelaide surprized, yielded for a moment to the allurements of pleasure which was new to her; she felt the first attacks of that bewitching sensation which leads to the sweet delirium, where nature, forgetting all that opposes her desires, seems to restore us again to her happy simplicity.

BUT this forgetfulness was short; confused on recollecting herself, M. du Bugei

complained of her lover, insisted on leaving him, but he was on his knees, he acknowledged his faults, he implored her forgiveness, a tender reconciliation followed this quarrel, and perhaps gave rise to a new one. How often was Adelaide displeased ! How many pardons did she grant ! satisfied her innocence was not injured by them, she did not reflect what all this might cost her heart. How did this night increase her passion ! how worthy did the Marquis appear of her affections ! and how deep were the traces no time could afterwards efface engraved upon her mind !

BUT at last they were obliged to separate, day beginning already to appear. They agreed before parting that the Marquis should wait M. du Bugei's return from the country in order to speak to him. Adelaide wanted time



to engage her father, yet afraid the Marquis's refusal had altered his intentions; she was to set out with him in six days, and the Marquis insisted on seeing her once more, she consented to meet him again the eve of her departure, permitted him to write to her every day, and left him, charmed with him and with the agreeable situation in which she now found herself.

WHILE she was indulging these pleasing hopes, Madame de Raifel lamented the Marquis's indifference; by continuing to write without discovering herself she hoped to engage, and even interest his attention; she had at least the pleasure of employing him, of speaking to him of her passion, perhaps of inspiring his heart with those sentiments that possessed her own. She was not surprized he had not worn the scarf, since he believed it

came from Madame d'Elmonte. Madame de Raifel durst not discover she was the person, but wished M. de Cressy might divine it. An unjust though perhaps natural impulse made her hate Madame d'Elmonte; she imagined this woman was the cause why so little attention had been paid her letter; she resolved to take from M. de Cressy all suspicions of its coming from that quarter; and therefore wrote him a billet in these terms.

**W**HEN love and fortune join to prepare a fate a worthy of you, when they would direct your steps towards an object that merits your attachment, how can you be guilty of a mistake so mortifying to me? she who has given you a thousand proofs of a shameful passion merits only your contempt; it is in vain you search in her for a heart, all whose motions you have been assured

fured are regulated by the dictates of modesty and honour. Lift your eyes higher ; it is amongst those who are most respected you will find the person who wishes for the notice, the cares, and even the tenderness of M. de Cressy,

THIS billet, sent with the same precaution as the first, was delivered to the Marquis at that moment when, full of Adelaide, he seemed little fitted to receive new impressions. Notwithstanding this second declaration of a passion so delicate, the mystery with which it was accompanied, the fortune it mentioned, and these words, *Lift your eyes higher*, made him consider attentively. He saw himself beloved by some woman who was rich and of distinguished rank. Madame de Raifel came at last into his thoughts ; her family was so illustrious,

illustrious, her manners so regular, her fortune so considerable, her alliances so great, that she might assume this stile without pride: but when he examined his conduct towards her, he rejected a suspicion he thought so ill founded. What probability that a woman so admired should prefer the only man perhaps who had neglected her!

In this confusion of ideas his ambition was awaked; he felt this passion revived which the desire he had to regain Adelaide had enfeebled but not destroyed. He beheld no longer in her those seducing charms that once affected him so tenderly; his inclination for her appeared to him a weakness which he had already sacrificed too much, he regretted his reconciliation with her, he was sorry he had seen her again, or ever loved her. But he was engaged to her by oaths, by the most solemn



solemn assurances; honour obliged him to fulfil them: but how feeble is her voice in a heart where ambition presides, which allowing itself to be seduced by the charms of riches, or the splendor of rank, prefers in its delirium the appearances of happiness to happiness itself! This day and the following were passed in a war of opposite sentiments which continually combated each other. That on which the Marquis was again to see Adelaide arrived, and surprized him still in that uncertainty into which Madame de Raifel's billet had thrown him. In these dispositions it would have been prudent in the Marquis not to have seen Adelaide, to have excused himself to her, and taken advantage of her absence to have determined himself; but these trifling incidents that give law to us, have reserved to themselves a right to follow only those of caprice.

WHILST

WHILST the Marquis gave himself up to vexation, very different emotions filled the heart of Madame du Bugei; pleased with her lover, without fear, without distrust, relying on his faith, on his love, the happiest prospects opened before her. With what complacency, with what delight did she reflect she was going to be called by that dear name she never heard pronounced without emotion! The pain the Marquis had given her was effaced from her remembrance; she thought only of the happiness that awaited her after her return from this short journey, every moment of which she had already reckoned. Her imagination, seduced by these agreeable ideas, made her look forward with hope to that moment which was to put an end to them, and deprive her for ever of an illusion so delightful to her.

SHE

SHE saw the Marquis with all the transports of a sincere joy, whose vivacity she did not endeavour to conceal from him. They talked a long time of their approaching union, of the measures they would take to hasten it. These projects which they formed together increased Madame du Bugui's gaiety; never had she appeared so chearful; the Marquis, whose designs were no longer the same, had the cruelty to indulge her in these agreeable illusions. The better to conceal the change, she seemed more passionate than ever; he affected a softened melting air; he spoke with transports of a flame already cooled, whose feeble remains had no object but his own gratification.

RESPECT ceases when love is at an end: whether his reflections had diminished him so far, as to make him forget the respect he owed

owed to Madame du Bugci, or whether her confidence, and the facility of abusing it, inspired him with a desire to try how far love and security will lead a young person who has no guardian but her own innocence, he was bold enough to endeavour to gain by seduction what he was no longer inclined to intitle himself to by honourable methods. He became importunate, bold; those favours he had ravished some days before, long disputed and at last yielded, did not satisfy him; he was continually demanding, always obtaining, yet he still complained. His burning sighs, stifled by the violence of his desires, his deceitful tears, his ardent and submissive intreaties, that phrase so simple in appearance, so often employed, yet always so prevalent over a woman's heart, *You do not love me, if you love me*, a thousand and a thousand times repeated, distressed Adelaide;

she



she loved, she could not bear her lover's doubts. Every moment he exacted new proofs of her tenderness; and the more he obtained, the less he seemed disposed to set bounds to his pretensions. Elenor was at a distance, the night, which was somewhat dark, diffused an obscurity over the place, which was but too favourable to M. de Cressy's designs. The tender and unsuspecting Adelaide allowed him to conduct her under a thick foliage; abandoned to the imprudence of her age, to ignorance of her danger, to her lover's faith, she seemed to have forgot herself; her heart, wholly possessed by love, had no room for any other object; without foreseeing, whither this captious question would lead, she had told him that she wished his happiness, and would deny nothing in her power to assure him of it; she was pronouncing these words, when the rashness of the Marquis, which

which he carried to extremes, recovered her from this dangerous delirium, restored her reason, and gave her strength to oppose his attempts.

SHE tore herself from his arms, flew from the grove, and called aloud on Elenor, without considering whether others might hear. Elenor ran to her ; Mademoiselle du Bugei, somewhat assured when she saw her, wanting strength to support herself, leaned against a tree, and hiding her face in the girl's bosom, wept with all the appearances of the bitterest sorrow. The Marquis, ashamed of an enterprize which had been so unsuccessful, threw himself at her feet, and endeavoured, but in vain, to appease her ; she heard him not, and continued to weep, without seeming to observe either his presence or his submissions ; at last making an effort,

effort, she pushed him away, and making some steps from him, lifting up to heaven her eyes drowned in tears, O! my father, cried she, I now feel the truth of what you told me, the man who conceals his designs from you, forms none that are safe for me. She walked about for some time without going to a greater distance; and at last, buried in thought, and leaning on her maid, took the way towards home, without deigning to reply to what the Marquis said so often to her. She was just going to enter when he stopt her, and besought her to hear him.

I WILL hear nothing, replied she haughtily; I despise, I hate you. I can now guess the reasons of your strange conduct to a girl to whom you owed respect, and which no other but yourself would have chosen for the object of an amusement which the vilest of her

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sex might have procured you. But I am punished, severely punished, for that fatal prepossession which made me love you, and believe you worthy of all the tenderness I had for you : with how much art have you deceived ! How unsuspicious was my heart ! But that heart has escaped you, it is yours no longer ; it regards the pain that tears it as a blessing, since it has discovered to it the baseness of yours. Return me my letter, added she, return to me that proof of a weakness that is odious to me ; and may I never call to mind the fatal inclination that prejudiced me in your favour, unless to remember how unworthy you was of it.

THE Marquis, confounded with her reproaches, still hesitated ; he was doubtful what resolution he ought to take ; he would not restore the letter, he begged he might be allowed



lowed to preserve the only token he had of the love she once honoured him with; he implored, he wept, he said every thing which he believed would calm her mind and dissipate her anger; but nothing could efface the impression his treachery had made on her; it was no longer in his power to impose; her heart was too severely hurt to pardon. She reiterated her commands with a tone and expression which made him easily see she was resolved to be obeyed, and as soon as she received the letter, hurried from him without deigning to hear what he had to plead.

WHAT a night did the unhappy Adelaide pass! No afflictions are so difficult to support as those which love occasions. What evil is equal to that which reflection heightens, and mixes shame with the bitterness of grief! She shuddered at the danger she had ran; the happiness

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of having escaped it gave her some consolation : but at what a price did she purchase it ? By the loss, her love, her desires of all those delightful schemes that had so agreeably employed her ; she must renounce all her hopes, and despise him she still adored. The lover is not always what we most regret ; when we are forced to withdraw our tenderness from him, it is the sentiment with which we were penetrated, it is the pleasing delusion forever vanished, it is the pleasure of loving ; a pleasure so great to a mind endowed with sensibility, that nothing can supply the happiness it felt in delivering itself up to this delightful commerce.

ADELAIDE wanted to read again the letter the Marquis had returned her. But what was her astonishment, in place of her writing, to see the Countess de Raifel's, which was perfectly

perfectly known to her ! As both those two billets were much alike, M. de Cressy had given Mademoiselle du Bugei that he had received from his unknown correspondent.

CONFUSED, amazed at reading it, she doubted not she had been made a sacrifice to the Marquis's vanity ; she imagined she discovered herself in the person who was accused of giving proofs of a shameful passion : a heart sunk by grief, easily indulges every thought that can still more afflict it. She believed the Countess was acquainted with all that had passed betwixt the Marquis and herself ; she called to mind what Madame de Raifel had said at the ball, and took it for a cruel irony ; she saw herself betrayed, and believed she was dishonoured ; she wept bitterly, and passed the night in groans, in agonies, and complaints of her unhappy destiny ; but as she was de-

terminated to have her letter returned, she wrote in the morning the following billet to M. de Cressy.

**Y**OU have made a mistake, Monsieur; I return you Madame de Raifel's letter, and beg you would send me mine. I did not believe there was a man on earth who could be reproached for loving me, nor that any one dared to suspect I had given proofs of a shameful passion. I own I ought to blush I ever gave you any of a pure and sincere affection, of which you was unworthy. Return my letter by Elenor, and be assured of the eternal contempt of Adelaide.

To this billet she added all those she had received from the Marquis, and charged Elenor to deliver this packet to him, with a positive order to bring no other answer than  
that



that which she demanded. The girl acquitted herself of her commission, but did not need to insist long on refusing an answer for her mistress. The Marquis, charmed with the discovery he had made, had no desire to justify himself to Adelaide; and if he pretended to wish to do so it was a natural consequence of that dissimulation by which he was governed, and which deceitful people often employ when it can be of no service to them.

THE letter Mademoiselle du Bugei demanded was restored, and the same day she set out with her father for Gersey. The effort she made to conceal her grief, and the vexation which oppressed her, brought on a violent fever the day after her arrival, which soon increased so greatly, that her recovery was almost despaired of.

WHILE she was dying at Gerfay, the author of a passion so tender, so sincere, of a situation so deplorable, already disengaged from the feeble ties which once united him to her, was base enough to forget her love, and all the pains it was to cost her. One advantage which the men's superior strength of mind gives them over us, is the ease with which they stifle the slight remorse they sometimes feel at the remembrance of a fond unhappy woman, whom they can reproach with nothing but an esteem for them, of which they are unworthy.

Of all the marks of tenderness M. de Cressy had received from Adelaide, the only one for which perhaps he thanked her, was that emotion of resentment which made her name Madame de Raifel. By informing him that she was the person who preferred him, and wished

wished to please him, He was convinced indeed that love and fortune had united to load him with their favours. The Countess, adorned with all those charms that could attract his wishes, offered to his imagination a thousand pleasures which he should enjoy with her ; rank, splendour, beauty, accomplishments, a title of which he was ambitious, and which this alliance might in time procure him ; how many reasons to make him ardent in his pursuits ? But he must conceal his ambition, he must prevent the bad impressions which his conduct to Adelaide might occasion in the mind of Madame de Raissel, if ever she happened to be informed of it. After having so long beheld her with indifference, he could not all at once shew himself the passionate lover, and yet less seem to be acquainted with her sentiments. He feared to hurt her pride, or her delicacy,

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by discovering her in the rout she had traced out, and perhaps took a pleasure in following.

THESE considerations determined him to act in appearance as he had hitherto done : he went no oftener to Madame de Raifel's ; but without seeming to design it, was always in those parties where she was to be met with, without talking to her of a passion he wished her to believe ; he behaved so as to persuade every body he felt a violent one for her ; he neither seemed to throw himself in her way, nor search after her, but an absence to which he often abandoned himself, and which her presence immediately banished, the embarrassment which the slightest pleasantry from her occasioned him, a continual attention to study her tastes, the easy air with which he adopted them, all those trifling attentions



tentions which seem to an indifferent person marks of friendship, but which a heart already prepossessed looks on as the solicitude of love; the art of displaying his own talents, of assuming all the engaging qualities that adorn an amiable character, were all employed by the Marquis, and all succeeded beyond his utmost hopes. The Countess easily believed him every thing he wished to appear. The men would spare themselves a great deal of the trouble they give themselves to impose on us, if they knew how easy the nobleness of our ideas render their deceits; a woman thinks herself degraded by supposing the object of her affections unworthy, and no sooner does she love, than she discovers more virtues in her lover than he dares to feign.

EVERY body assured Madame de Raïsel that the Marquis de Cressy loved her; it was with

with pleasure she listened to them. She was afraid to indulge a happiness which the event might destroy; nevertheless she honoured him with the most flattering distinctions, and waited only for a declaration of his sentiments, to discover to him the sincerity and tenderness of her own. He began to visit her with more assiduity, when one day a slight indisposition confining her to her chamber, M. de Cressy was admitted, notwithstanding the resolution she had taken to see nobody. She was thoughtful, and even sad. The Marquis suited his behaviour to the serious humour he observed her in; he begged to know the cause with all the appearance of the tenderest inquietude; the Countess told him a person she dearly loved had been extremely bad, and enjoyed but a languishing state of health, that she had but just heard of it, and at last named Mademoiselle du Bugéi.

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AT this discourse the Marquis's confusion was extreme, he changed colour, and cast down his eyes in profound silence : the Countess was surprized ; I see, said she, looking on him with attention, that this intelligence has given you great emotion ; I am sorry I told you of it so abruptly, but I was ignorant what effect it would have ; and seeing him still continue silent, I knew not, added she, that you had any particular connections with Adelaide ; I love her, her loss would have afflicted me extremely, and I know not why you ought to blush at shewing you would have felt it yet more sensibly. If I have any connections with Mademoiselle du Bagei, returned the Marquis, they are of such a kind as will disquiet me all the rest of my life : I may blush, and appear confused, when I hear the situation she is in, since I have all the reason in the world to accuse myself as the unfortunate

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nate cause of it. You, cried the Countess !  
 Ah ! Madame, interrupted M de Cressy, suspend your judgment ; I am a man, young, vain perhaps ; I pretend not to be free from blame ; I have faults, I feel them, I cannot forgive them to myself : But if you knew— if my heart was better known to you, perhaps you would not condemn me.

It is difficult to comprehend you, said the Countess, a little discomposed, in supposing the lively interest you take in Mademoiselle du Bugei's situation, discloses a tender inclination. Why ought you to blush at discovering it ? By what singularity can your love be her misfortune ? What are those faults with which you reproach yourself, and which you fear you can never pardon ? If it is possible to acquaint me with them, without offending Adelaide,

or



or injuring her, your frankness will oblige me.

If the emotions of our hearts depended on ourselves, on our own reflections, replied M. de Cressy, Adelaide would be happy, and I should not feel the dreadful regret of having troubled her repose, and destroyed, at least for some time, the sweetness and tranquillity of her life. But how, Madame, can I confess to you a levity, an indiscretion nothing can excuse? It is a fault I never can forget, the remembrance of which will continually afflict me. Madame de Raifel, affected with the air and voice in which he expressed himself, repeated her intreaties, and pressed him to acquaint her with the cause of his uneasiness. M. de Cressy, charmed to find an opportunity of prepossessing her on the only article which could discover his real sentiments, seemed at last

: left to yield to her instances. I am going, Madame, said he, by my sincerity, to run the risque of losing part of the esteem you honour me with; but can you form a desire in my power to satisfy, and my heart not out-fly your wishes?

You are not ignorant, Madame, with what indifference I beheld all women, even those who seemed to distinguish me; employed only with the care of paying my attendance at court, of performing the duties my rank imposed on me, of acquiring friends, I avoided giving myself up to amusements, little formed indeed to seduce me. A heart naturally tender, a sincerity of temper, made me regard love as a passion it was pleasing to feel, but ridiculous to feign; in these dispositions, Madame, I beheld you, and my heart told me you was the only person who could inspire me with those

those delightful sentiments which sprung from admiration, increased by respect, strengthened by esteem, and supported by friendship, can alone satisfy all the desires of the soul, and form those sweet and lasting chains which no time can break : but our fortunes so different, the reports spread of the little inclination you shewed to enter into new engagements, so many offers more advantageous, which you had refused, pride enough perhaps to avoid the danger of a refusal, a thousand reasons obliged me to cancel the ardour with which you had inspired me. I wished to triumph over it ; I constrained my desires that led me towards you ; I avoided all opportunities of seeing you ; I appeared no oftener at your house than civility obliged me. It was at this time, Madame, that Adelaide discovered inclinations so favourable to me,

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that it was impossible to behave with coldness to an amiable girl, who did not conceal from me that I was agreeable to her. Without hopes of you, without passion for her, determined, or rather hurried away by that vanity that renders us so sensible of admiration, I indulged the inclinations of *Mademoiselle du Bagel*; I gave myself up to the pleasure of contemplating the progress love made in her heart, without reflecting on its consequences; I admired its advances, they flattered me, and by a giddiness I can never enough repent, I congratulated myself as the cause of them. I saw *Adelaide* often at *Madame de Gerlay's*; when she was not there, I sought her in the public walks, in the houses where she visited, or wherever I expected to find her; she amused my inquietude, and that weariness inseparable from a solitary man, little attached



to any thing, and whose desires have no object but a happiness that flies them. My assiduities were remarked ; M. du Bugei would have me to explain my designs : I found I really had none, and discovered at the same time the imprudence of my conduct. Convinced that Adelaide loved me, a sentiment of gratitude inclined me to unite my fate forever with hers ; but when I reflected more maturely, I thought this would be betraying her ; I thought it unjust to give her a husband whose heart she did not possess ; I chose rather to pass in M. du Bugei's eyes for a self-interested man, and therefore made use of the only pretext that offered to disengage myself ; I loved rather to be thought ungrateful and inconstant by Adelaide, than run the risk of making her unhappy by my indifference. I refused then, and discontinued my

affiduities to Mademoiselle du Bugei. I saw her again at the ball, where you both were; her dejected air, her sadness, some words she said to me, the secret reproaches I made myself for having encouraged her tenderness without partaking it, the interest we take in the distresses we have occasioned; her youth, her beauty, her love, made so lively an impression on me, that I was going perhaps to offer her all the proofs she could exact of my repentance; when casting my eyes on you, I felt every thing yield to the irresistible charm that attracted me towards Madame de Raifel.

How could I deprive myself forever of the feeble hope that sometimes flattered me? I did not expect the happiness I wished for; but if nothing promised it, at least no unsurmountable obstacle deprived me of the plea-

pleasure of sometimes thinking of it, of making it the subject of my reveries in those moments when our rambling unconfined ideas, flattering the imagination that gave birth to them, seem to surmount all the difficulties that oppose our wishes.

I HAD received a billet that made little impression on me, chiefly, because ( I know not by what whim ) it came into my head it was from Madame d'Elmonte ; I received another that informed me the first was not from her : Shall I tell you Madame, added the Marquis, interrupting himself, dare I confess to you from what hand I believed it came ?

THE Countess cast down her eyes, blushed, and with an air and voice that discovered how much this discourse interested her, begged him to proceed.

I BELIEVED it was from you, Madame ; and my love returning with double force, no more of Adelaide, no more disquietude about her sentiments. Of what importance then to me was her esteem, or her tenderness, her pleasures, or her pains ? I thought only of Madame de Raïsel, her adored image filled up all my heart ; I gave up Mademoiselle du Bugei, I saw her again only to convince her I never had loved her, that I never could be hers, and by a cruelty I must blame, I obliged her to banish from her a lover she ought to detest, and who could not remember her without detesting himself.

How I pity Adelaide, said Madame de Raïsel ! how much pain must it give her to reconcile herself to such an event ! can she forget you ! But conclude ; your sincerity obliges me. How am I flattered by this confidence ?



science ? What can I say farther, Madame,  
 continued M. de Cressy ; I durst not inform  
 you of what I believed I had discovered ;  
 but I could no longer deny myself the pleasure  
 of shewing you that I would obey your com-  
 mands, and raise my eyes to an object the  
 most worthy of my services. You now, Ma-  
 dame, know all ; you are acquainted with all  
 the secrets of a heart which has always been  
 devoted to you, and whose fate depends on  
 your goodness. What reward am I permit-  
 ted to expect for my obedience ? May I hope  
 that a passion you alone could kindle in this  
 heart, has indeed touched yours ? Is it you,  
 is it the amiable Countess de Raifel, who has  
 deigned to advise me to seek after my hap-  
 piness ? Clear up my doubts ; on my knees  
 I attend the decree which you are going to  
 pronounce. Speak, Madame ; speak, and think

that on this moment depends the fate of a man who adores you !

WHO would not have given credit to a recital so simple and natural ? What reason had Madame de Raifel to suspect the truth of it ? She believed the Marquis, and presenting to him her hand, which he received on his knees and pressed with ardour to his lips : Yes, said she, it was I that desired your love ; you see how the declaration you have made affects me. How precious is that love to me ! I partake it, I dare confess it, and shall glory in proving it : Yes, I place all my happiness in believing that yours depends on me. So full a declaration was received with all the marks of a sincere joy. The Countess endeavoured to persuade M. de Cressy, that if his conduct towards Adelaide was not altogether blameless, he ought to give over afflicting him.

himself for it ; that her sickness might be owing to some other cause ; and that at her age, time and absence soon effaced the strongest impressions : Not that I blame your sensibility, added she ; on the contrary it redoubles my esteem ; and my heart is pleased in discovering that yours is capable of so much tenderness.

M. DE Cressy succeeded so well as to make a merit of his cruelty to Mademoiselle du Bugei, and at the same time persuaded Madame de Raifel he had loved her at a time when he had not so much as thought of her ; in short, he appeared in her eyes the most sincere, the tenderest of lovers : While he applauded himself on the art with which he had deceived her, he ascribed his success to his own address ; the error of all those who are guided by falsehood. One may be credulous with-

without being weak or imprudent ; and extreme confidence is always owing to a persuasion that no one can be base enough to abuse it.

NOT long after this interview, Madame de Raifel declared the day of her marriage, and the spouse she had made choice of. The Marquis received the congratulations of all the Countess's acquaintance ; his happiness was the envy of a crowd of rivals less fortunate than himself ; though perhaps worthy to be more so. These nuptials were celebrated with splendour, and the magnificent entertainments that succeeded them, sufficiently shewed the happiness of the new married pair. Madame de Raifel had settled on M. de Cressy all the estates she had in her own disposal. His fortune fixed, his ambition gratified, the love and beauty of the

Mar-



Marchioness, a house which was the abode of pleasure, made him taste so much happiness in this union, that he soon forgot the methods by which he had acquired it.

MADAME de Cressy, perfectly happy, as she loved and believed she was beloved, was delighted in continually reflecting that she reigned over a heart sincere, generous, tender, devoted only to her ; a heart, the nobleness of which she believed unequalled. She looked on her husband as a divinity ; he became dearer to her every day : Continually employed in procuring him new amusements, she seemed to live only to diffuse pleasure over the life of him she loved ; the Marquis's most trifling desires, his slightest whims, became serious affairs for Madame de Cressy ; she sacrificed to him her own inclinations, even the pleasure of seeing him ; a  
plea-

pleasure so great, that neither time nor custom could make it less dear to her.

IN the mean while Adelaide, after a month's illness, and more than two of languor, at last recovered perfect health ; but a deep melancholy had taken possession of her mind. Discontent had left such profound traces on her heart, love still reigned there with so much violence ; she was so unable to forget the cruel man who had taken a pleasure in rendering her unhappy, that the very idea of seeing again the place he inhabited, threw her into a weakness as dangerous as the fever from which she was recovered. The Count de St. Agne, young, handsome, amiable, to whom she was destined, augmented her disquiet by the assiduities he paid her ; nothing could console her ; the remembrance of M. de Cressy alone animated  
a heart

a heart accustomed only to employ itself with him. What tears accompanied this melancholy recollection ! But how dear, how lively, how continually present to her mind ! In this situation her return to Paris, where the court then was, filled her with apprehension ; and every day that brought her departure from Gerfay nearer, added to her wretchedness. One evening, when all the company had assembled to play, the Chevalier de St. Helene, who had been expected at Gerfay for some days past, arrived ; and to excuse his delay, mentioned what had detained him at Paris, viz. the marriage of Madame de Raifel and M. de Cressy. Madame de Gerfay entered into this detail, put a thousand questions to him, and the Chevalier expatiated with pleasure on a discourse which seemed agreeable to her.

WHAT

WHAT became of Adelaide in bearing this intelligence? A mortal coldness seized her heart; pale, trembling, without strength, almost without sensations; she threw herself back on her chair, and closing her eyes, wished she might never open them more; happily for her, M. du Bugei was not present; and as she was still weak since her illness, no one thought of ascribing her swoon to any other cause.

It continued long; on her recovery she found herself on her bed, surrounded by a crowd of people, who endeavoured to recall her to life. She signified her desire to be left alone, and as soon as she saw herself at liberty; he is married, cried she, throwing her arms around Elenor's neck, he is married! repeated she a thousand times: I have now no fears, no doubt, no hope; he is lost, for-



ever lost ! Nothing can restore him to me !  
 He never can be mine ! Madame de Raifel is  
 happy ! She triumphs in his arms over the  
 warts of an unfortunate girl ! But does she  
 deserve the heart she has ravished from me ?  
 Inhuman ! with how much seeming sincerity  
 did she affect to sympathize in my pains, and  
 to be ignorant of their cause. She offered  
 me her assistance, her advice, her friendship :  
 Ah, cruel woman ! She is his wife, she reigns  
 in his heart, she forms his pleasures, and par-  
 takes them with him ; she may satisfy all the  
 wishes of him she loves ; she may receive and  
 return his careffes without blushing ; and  
 place her happiness in her sensibility : Ah  
 me ! I cannot recal those happy moments  
 without shame—too dear, and which no  
 time can efface from my memory. Ah, Ele-  
 lenor ! pursued she, in the bitterness of her  
 soul,

soul, imprudent Elenor ! Why did thy fatal complaisance expose me to the danger of seeing him again ? Alas, but for thee, I should have been ignorant of one part of my misfortunes.

M. du Bugei who came to inquire after her health, interrupted these sad complaints. Elenor assured him she needed only rest ; and the unfortunate Adelaide passed the night in an oppression of spirits that restrained her tears, and deprived her of the only relief to her distress. This extreme depression continued for some days ; at last, stifling her emotions, she appeared calm. Her father waited only the recovery of her health to carry her back to Paris ; but she had determined never more to see it.

SHE

SHE begged M. du Bugei to allow her to pass a month at Chelles; where she gave him to understand she hoped for the perfect recovery of her health. It was with regret he conducted her thither. Madame du Bugei wept violently at parting with him; the pain he felt in leaving her at Chelles, was a presage of the loss he was going to sustain. The fair unhappy Adelaide a few days after her arrival entered on her noviciate; her trials shortened, as she had the advantage of being educated in the house; she was permitted at the end of six months to take the white veil; notwithstanding the remonstrances of her father, the grief of the Count de Saint-Agne who loved her, and the united efforts of all her family.

MADAME de Cressy was afflicted at the choice Adelaide had made; she feared her inclination for the Marquis had determined her;

she durst not come to an explanation with him, afraid of giving him disquiet, and adding to the secret reproaches which perhaps he gave himself. Adelaide's misfortune was sensibly felt by the Marchioness; her generous heart was torn with regret, when she suspected herself as the innocent cause of her loss. She shed tears at the fate of a young person who had torn herself from the world at an age when she could not judge of the effects time can produce; and guided by a violent emotion which might soon subside, had perhaps given herself up to the horrors of a fruitless and eternal repentance.

MORE than a year passed away in the delights of a happy passion, gratified, but never cloyed. Perhaps this tranquility might have continued longer, had not an event happened which interested the Marchioness's generosity.



Madame de Berneil, an old friend of Madame de Cressy's mother, lived retired at Val-de-grace with a daughter, the only issue of an unhappy marriage which had ruined her fortune by a series of unlucky events, a detail of which is unnecessary. She subsisted decently on a pension from the king; but this pension was only during her own life, and her daughter needed the assistance of her friends to endeavour to preserve one half of it, a favour they might perhaps obtain, but could not be certain of. Madame de Berneil, who had more than once experienced Madame de Cressy's friendship, finding herself dangerously ill, and death fast approaching, had recourse to her; she acquainted her with her situation, and the Marchioness tenderly complying with the dictates of her generous heart, went to her; she found the poor lady almost expiring, and so anxious

about her daughter's fate, that Madame de Cressy, affected with a concern so natural, the melancholy scene before her, the tears of the daughter, and the mother's tender sorrow, promised with a solemn oath to take care herself of Madame de Berneil, to take her home to her house, and never leave her, till she had procured for her an establishment suitable to her birth, which might render her happy.

MADAME de Berneil seemed to have waited only for this promise from a woman, the nobleness of whose sentiments were well known to her, to enable her to render up her soul to heaven with tranquility. She died the same night, and Madame de Cressy, who had never left her, tenderly embraced Madame de Berneil, renewed the assurances she had given her mother, and attending her to her house, left her there to the care of her woman, while she

he went to Versailles to M. de Cressy, who expected her.

SHE acquainted him with the engagement she had come under, and expressed some apprehension lest he might be displeased, but excused herself, by assuring him the time was too short to permit her to consult him: M. de Cressy made a jest of this submission, which he treated as childish; he assured her he should always approve of whatever she did. This behaviour to Madame de Bernail was such as one would shew to a beloved sister. The Marchioness treated her not as a girl whose fate depended on her goodness, but as one from whom she herself expected favours, and whose abode with her ought to be attended by all the pleasures she could procure her.

HORTENSIA de Berncil was somewhat more than twenty, her figure was remarkable for nothing but the art with which she concealed its defects; a taste for dress, not common in a person brought up in solitude, gave an air of elegance to every thing she wore; she had always desired to please, though she was long without an object; her mind, tho' not brilliant, was capable of deep reflection. It was difficult to understand her temper; a seeming coldness, and the mystery she made of her real inclinations, gave her an air of the utmost indifference. The weariness she had suffered in an involuntary solitude had given a harshness to her temper. She had humour, and knew how to conceal the sharpness of it under the affected excuse of bad health, which the least emotion made an impression on; capricious, jealous, susceptible of passion, though incapable of tenderness or friendship,

Hortensia



Hortensia was not of a disposition to feel those sentiments which Madame de Cressy's conduct towards her ought to have inspired.

MADemoiselle de Berneil had already lived some time at the Hotel de Cressy, when the Marquis one day amusing himself with studying an air which was wrong pricked, Hortensia taking it up discovered she had a fine voice, and sung perfectly well. He loved musick, and this talent, which he knew not before she had possessed, redoubled his attention to her: Madame de Cressy saw with pleasure the taste he had taken for her; she wished to place her in the most advantageous light, and waited only for a favourable opportunity to dispose of her in marriage. Monsieur de Cressy was one morning with Hortensia at the Marchioness's toilet, when a letter was brought him, which he opened without re-

fection, but could not read without discovering the utmost sensibility. This letter was from Mademoiselle du Bugel; she wrote it the eve of that day on which she was to take the black veil, the last ceremony of her consecration to a religious life. M. de Cressy's eyes o'erflowed with tears, the letter dropt from his hands, and while he hid his face with them to conceal his emotions, the Marchioness, frightened at the effects this letter produced, made a sign to one of her women to take it up, and bring it to her. She took it without reading it, and running to her husband, whom she tenderly embraced, eagerly enquired what disagreeable intelligence could overcome him thus? But the Marquis, still inconsolable, bade her read the Letter. It was as follows.

" I 'T is from the innermost recesses of an asylum, where I can no longer fear the perfidy

bidy of your sex, that I give you an eternal  
 adieu. Birth, riches, honours, dignity, all  
 have vanished from my eyes. My youth  
 withered by my tears, the taste for pleasure  
 annihilated in my heart, love extinguished,  
 the recollection of the past, a too lively  
 regret, with which it is continually accom-  
 panied, have buried me for ever in this retreat.  
 O thou, who hast conducted me to this tomb,  
 do not fear my reproaches; I only write to assure  
 you of my forgiveness! I offer up to heaven  
 a victim sacrificed by thy hands; and I ar-  
 dently pray that all the merit of the voluntary  
 sacrifice I now make may be yours. The  
 august spouse whom Adelaide has chosen will  
 erase from her heart those sentiments which  
 she cannot preserve without offending him;  
 he will implant those virtues he beholds with  
 delight, and that forgetfulness which he re-  
 quires; she dares hope he will forgive the  
 motives

motives that now determine her. Then prostrate at the feet of his altars she will implore for you all that happiness of which you have deprived her ; and if any thing can yet interest her in a world she has abandoned, it will be only to assure herself the Marquis de Cressy is happy. Tell Madame de Cressy I pardon the opinion she has had of me. Tell her I have forgot her injustice, and remember only the tender friendship I had for her."

THE Marchioness in finishing this letter threw her arms around her husband, and pressing him with inexpressible tenderness ; weep, said she weep, monsieur, bathing him with her tears ; ah, you cannot shew too much sensibility for so noble, so constant a heart ! Dear, amiable Adelaide, cried she, it is then done, and we have lost you for ever ! Ah, must  
I reproach



I reproach myself with depriving you of the only happiness you aspired after? cannot I enjoy that happiness so dear to me without knowing that my felicity has destroyed yours?

THE Marquis, touched with the generous regret she shewed for Adelaide, pressed her with transport, wiped her tears, and by the tenderest caresses, and the most endearing expressions, besought her to forgive the imprudence he had committed in shewing her this letter.

MADemoiselle de Berneil, who was witness to this affecting scene, beheld the Marchioness with astonishment. All she could comprehend of it was, that Madame de Cressy was afflicted at the retreat of a girl her husband had loved, and who by his tears she imagined he still loved. A sensibility like this was  
above

above Hortensia's understanding; she looked on it as a weakness. A bad heart often mistakes those emotions to which it is a stranger, and that noble disinterestedness which makes one forget himself, to share the distresses of another, for want of fortitude.

ADELAIDE's adieu afflicted the Marquis for some days: but the variety of pleasures in which he indulged himself soon dissipated the transient sorrow. Madame de Cressy felt it much longer. The idea of Mademoiselle du Bugei prostrate at the feet of the altars, praying for the Marquis, drawing down from heaven benedictions on him by her pure and fervent devotions, melted her heart, and made her for ever present to her mind. The last lines of her letter surprized her; she could not understand them. She often asked M. de Cressy the meaning of them; but the embarrassments

raffments and ill humour he discovered at  
 these questions determined her to speak of it  
 no more. Nevertheless this reserve in a man  
 to whom she had none, affected the Marchio-  
 nefs extremely ; she was uneasy at it, and be-  
 gan to fear that in speaking of Adelaide he  
 he had not been so sincere as she had believed.  
 What was that opinion of her character which  
 Mademoiselle du Bugel accused her of ? what  
 had she to pardon her ? there seemed a mystery  
 in these expressions she was extremely de-  
 sirous to penetrate ; her excessive complaisance  
 for the Marquis obliged her to silence ; and  
 respecting the secret he was so anxious  
 to conceal, she took no methods to discover it ;  
 but this first proof that she was not possess-  
 ed of all his confidence, and that he could  
 disguise from her the truth, gave her great  
 uneasiness. The very idea of having been  
 deceived in the smallest trifle by a person one  
 loves,

loves, and believes incapable of artifice, is like a dagger to the heart, it wounds it every moment, it gives entrance to suspicion, renders every thing doubtful, and gives room to suspect that the happiness one enjoys is no more than a pleasing dream ready to vanish.

MADemoiselle de Berneil, to whom Madame de Cressy opened her heart, was far from comprehending that delicacy of sentiment that troubled the sweetness of life; she raillied M. de Cressy on the melancholy Adelaide's letter had occasioned him, and giving a witty malicious turn to that power he seemed to have over tender hearts, congratulated herself on not being of the number of those who know not to resist the attacks of love; she told the Marquis she was astonished how a young person could give up the world, merely because she could not please and attach him. As  
for



for me, continued she, I love pleasure, and though I believe myself sure of my heart, I am resolved to avoid you, lest I take a fancy to return to the convent. This railery piqued the Marquis; his vanity was extreme: do you, said he, think it so easy to resist my services, if I were assiduous in paying you them. Sincerely I think it, returned Mademoiselle de Berneil; and though you are extremely agreeable, I believe, nay I feel it is possible to see you and yet preserve one's indifference. Yes, said the Marquis, it is possible; but you do not know how many graces the desire of pleasing bestows upon the man who is earnest in it. It is necessary to have been beloved by some one, in order to be assured how far we would have resisted: and if I loved you, if I wished to persuade you of it, perhaps you would be undeceived as to the opinion you have of your own firmness.

Ah,

Ah, surely not, replied Hortensia ; you are the very person who could never succeed with me ; as you can never shew a passion for me without offending me, nor love me without forgetting what you owe to the most amiable of womankind ; you could inspire me with no sentiments but those of contempt. You believe so, said the Marquis ; but be assured those reflections made in cold blood never once occur to a heart really softened. Those things that make us look on an indifferent person with contempt, inspire us with pity for a tender lover. We are never without reasons to justify those sentiments we are desirous of indulging. Hortensia at this discourse redoubled her pleasantries, and was obstinate in maintaining that she feared not his attacks, and that whatever passion he might discover for her, it was impossible she could ever return it. This conversation was frequently

frequently resumed, and always with the same assurances on Mademoiselle de Berneil's part.

THE Marquis, accustomed to have his desires prevented, could not support the contempt of a girl, whom he thought no ways intitled to talk with so much haughtiness; he was offended at it, and wished to punish her, by inspiring her with a passion of which she believed herself so little susceptible. Vanity determined him to endeavour to please her; she saw his design; she laughed at it, and managed his self-love so little, that from the simple design of making a conquest, he formed that of touching her heart. The little progress he made at first did not relax his pursuits: he became ardent, importunate, and, losing sight of what he had at first in view, he forgot why he talked the language of love to Mademoiselle de Berneil. He was

H

continually

continually entertaining her with a passion that ceased to be feigned; it became a serious affair to him, and the only sentiment that affected his heart.

MADAME de Cressy was so far from suspecting the Marquis's attachment, that she believed herself obliged to him for the attention he shewed a girl she protected, and by whom she believed herself tenderly beloved. She talked of him continually to her, she boasted of his merit, the graces of his mind and person, the equality of his temper, the sweetness of his manners, the nobleness of his sentiments; she compared him to all those she had seen, to all who were admired, to find him still more perfect.

MADemoiselle de Bernail joined in the praises the Marchioness gave M. de Cressy; insensibly they made an impression on her:

the



the ardour with which he was beloved gave him new charms in her eyes. Madame de Cressy's love communicated itself to the heart of her rival; and all those graces that rendered the Marchioness so worthy to please, to attach this husband whom she adored, served only to heighten Hortensia's pride, who saw it in her power to deprive her of him; it excited her vanity, and she began to consider her triumph over a woman so superior to her in all respects, as somewhat extremely glorious to her.

It was then to pride and coquetry that M. de Cressy owed the first compliances of Mademoiselle de Bernell; she did not hide from him an inclination which however she durst not avow; she yielded by little and little; the only defences she used were duty, the friendship she had for the Marchioness,

the obligations she owed her. Insurmountable obstacles, had Mademoiselle de Berneil thought aright; but when one has gone some length in the road to ingratitude it is impossible to stop. The Marquis found a way to remove Hortensia's scruples; she yielded, she forgot the tenderness and generosity of a friend, to indulge the momentary inclination of a lover. What a difference! What a loss! Whatever we may think in the delirium of passion, a lover is not worth a friend.

PERHAPS when Mademoiselle de Berneil returned the Marquis's passion, she yielded less to love than curiosity; perhaps she was desirous to know if this passion was really productive of all that happiness of which she had been told it was the source; she wished to enjoy its pleasures, but had no tenderness

to offer in return; the more she imagined she sacrificed to indulge the wishes of her lover, the more she exacted from his gratitude. The sentiment by which she was influenced, was not the sincere attachment of Adelaide, nor the tender, delicate passion of the Marchioness; it was voluptuousness, but still more the pleasure of domineering over a heart, and subjecting it to all her caprices. She abused the power the Marquis had given her over him; she assumed an absolute power over his will; she became his tyrant, and made him bear those oppressive chains that are always worn with regret, the weight of which is sincerely felt, which one endeavours to get free of, but is unable to break.

SUBJECTED to this imperious mistress, the Marquis thought with regret on the happi-

ness he enjoyed before he listened to the suggestions of the fatal inclination that led him towards her. Adored by a wife who had no equal, whose amiable qualities seemed exerted only to form the happiness of all who approached her; who always attentive to oblige him, had no pleasures but those he felt, no joy but that which sparkled from his eyes. This lovely woman who had made his life so delightful, and so happy, was still the same: but her beauty, her virtue, her solitude, her gentleness, once the source of M. de Cressy's felicity, served only now to afflict, to confound him, and embitter every moment of his life.

OFTEN ill used by Mademoiselle de Berneil, tired of the yoke, and ashamed he had ever submitted to it, he gave himself up  
with



with joy to those warm and irresistible returns of tenderness that restored him to the Marchioness's arms; sometimes fondly pressing her in his, it was with difficulty he suppressed those tears remorse wrung from his heart. So much love betrayed, so much confidence abused, the comparison he made between two persons so different, two characters so opposite, excited in him such lively emotions, that sometimes he was ready to throw himself at the Marchioness's feet, to confess his weakness, and beseech her to remove the object of it; but his habitual want of sincerity restrained his heart ready to open, and pour itself into the bosom of a friend who could have yet restored to him that peace and felicity he no longer enjoyed.

MADemoiselle de Berneil often surprised him in those tender moments: severe

railleries, long disputes, a bitterness that was insupportable, followed the least cause she imagined she had to complain. She was difficult to be reconciled, and set the highest value on the forgiveness of a fault; but though she was accustomed to govern, and had subjected a heart which she attached to her by every method that ought to have deprived her of it; yet it was impossible for her to destroy the remorse he felt at having deceived the Marchioness, nor the attachment he preserved for her. It was impossible for her to stifle in the Marquis's breast, that powerful voice which forces us to hear it amidst the intoxication of pleasure, and continually reminds us that we have not the cruel power of enjoying in peace a happiness we have dared to found on the misery of another.

MADAME

MADAME de Cressy was but too well convinced of a change in the Marquis ; always sad, thoughtful, she saw he suffered, that some secret pain devoured his peace : she had begged in vain to be intrusted with it ; she durst not interrogate him farther, and endeavoured to conceal from him the grief his disquiet, and the mystery he made of it, gave her. She could not suspect him of any intrigue abroad ; his assiduity at home, and in all those places to which she went, banished all ideas of this kind. He shewed no preference to any of the women he saw ; all his actions were known, at least seemed to be ; nevertheless the Marchioness believed he loved her no more. She had soon a convincing proof of it at a time when she ought least to have expected it. She fell ill, and her indisposition, although not dangerous,

was

was of a long continuance. Mademoiselle de Berneil constrained herself so far during the first days of it as to attend her constantly; but soon forgetting what she owed to her generosity, and even what was due to decency, which obliged her not to quit the Marchioness's apartment, very seldom afterwards appeared there, and only at those times when it was impossible for her to avoid it. The Marquis followed her example; and making the most of the liberty he now had, of being frequently alone with her, passed whole hours in her apartment, and was never to be seen in Madame de Cressy's but when she received company.

THIS indifference from a man so dear to her, rendered her recovery more afflicting than her illness had been; it pierced to the bottom of her heart, and it was impossible  
longer



longer to doubt that she intirely lost her husband's affection. This melancholy discovery was reserved to herself; she indulged herself in no complaints, nor did she lessen in any instance the sweetness and affection she had ever shewn him.

THE neglect of Mademoiselle de Bernail appeared to her a natural consequence of the coldness of her disposition, and therefore she was little surprized with it. Her recovery was now completed; when one morning being alone and ready to set out for the country, M. de Cressy who did not go with her, came into her chamber to present to her a little box of a particular form he had just bought; she was pleased with this mark of attention, and still more with some agreeable thing he said on presenting it. She was going to answer, but looking on the Marquis, his melancholy air affected her, and would not permit

mit her to express her thanks, unless by an expressive look, which seemed to search for his secret in the bottom of his heart. M. de Cressy took her hand, he kissed it several times with a timid and respectful air; he appeared like a man who is desirous of favour, but fears to request it, because he feels himself unworthy of it. Never had Madame de Cressy appeared to him more lovely, never had she inspired him with sweeter emotions; but the injury he had done her seemed to him a barrier between them; he forgot his rights, or durst not claim them; he wished to speak, he feared to explain himself; he looked on her, sighed, and was silent; when the Marchioness, transported by that tender sentiment which M. de Cressy's coldness had not abated, throwing her arms around him let herself sink at his feet, and pressing him with all the ardour

dour of unaltered love; Tell me, Monsieur, tell me, cried she, melting in tears, what have I done to lose the happiness of pleasing you? Why do you shun me? Am I become hateful to your sight? No, I cannot live and believe I am no longer dear to you. Ah, what have I done! what, tell me, have I done to banish you from me? If you deprive me of your love, if I must no longer enjoy that precious blessing, ought you to deprive me of all? Ah, Monsieur, do you believe me unworthy of your friendship?

M. DE Cressy could have wished at this moment that the earth had opened and hid him in its bosom. Ah, rise, Madame, said he, covered with confusion, rise! This submission becomes only me: you at the feet of a wretch who could neglect you, who gave you cause to weep, while he only ought to have

have shed tears. Ah, you was, you always will be dear to me; I respect, I love, I adore you: but am I still worthy to tell you so? It is at your feet, added he, kneeling in his turn, that I implore your pity, that I request a generous forgiveness; I hope for it from your goodness, from your nobleness of mind. Learn then, Madame, into what an error——He was proceeding, when Mademoiselle de Berneil, who was going with the Marchioness, knowing she was ready, and fearing to make her wait, opened the door hastily, and surprized him on his knees, wetting his wife's hands with tears, while she endeavoured to raise him. M. de Cressy was confounded at her appearance; he remained silent and amazed, the words died on his lips. In vain did the Marchioness press him to explain himself; in vain did she assure him he was already pardoned: frozen

at



at the sight of Mademoiselle de Berneil, he could not speak, nor lift up his eyes. At last, seeming to recover himself, he offered his hand to Madame de Cressy, and conducted her to her coach; as soon as she was seated he retired, fearing to meet the eyes of Hortensia, who, mistress of herself, seemed to have no interest in what had passed. Her anxiety nevertheless was great, and she waited with impatience till Madame de Cressy should open.

ALAS, said Madame de Cressy, at what an unlucky moment did you enter ! He was going to disclose to me his heart, to entrust to me that secret he has so long concealed : he loves me, he told me so, his confusion assures me of it. I have not lost the hopes of happiness ; his tenderness is not extinguished, it is only suspended by some uneasiness I cannot

not divine. But, has he never said any thing to you that could discover it ? He seems to have a friendship and esteem for you ; cannot you inform me of what he has concealed from me ? Hortensia assured her she was ignorant the Marquis had any cause of uneasiness. He has, he has, Mademoiselle, returned the Marchioness. But what are these reproaches he makes on himself ? He has offended me, he says : Ah ! let him speak, and all shall be forgotten. My God ! is it possible that opportunity is lost ! Madame de Berneil feigned abundance of regret at having interrupted so interesting a conversation ; she was embarrassed ; but Madame de Cressy was too much busied with her own ideas to observe Hortensia's constraint. The house where they were to pass some days, was very near Chelles. The windows of Madame de Cressy's apartment had a view of the abbey gardens :

gardens : She had never lost the remembrance of Adelaide. That letter, the conclusion of which had so astonished her, came afresh into her thoughts : she imagined Mademoiselle du Bugei could alone give the explanation she had in vain endeavoured to procure from the Marquis : Her nearness to her renewed that curiosity, and desire she had with difficulty suppressed : But fearing her name might affect Adelaide, if she went to Chelles without informing her, she wrote to her with much friendship, and begged her to appoint an hour when she might see and talk with her. Adelaide was surprized at this request ; her first resolution was not to see the Marchioness. It seemed hard to admit her into a retreat she had made choice of to avoid her, to see again one of those two persons she wished to fly ; who had forced her to bury herself in this abode. By

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what

what cruelty, said she, would the wife of M. de Cressy display to my eyes a happiness I no longer envy, but which it is inhuman to boast of before me !

SHE determined at last to receive the only visit she would have avoided in the world, but believed she ought not to refuse in a convent : She looked on it as a mortification that the vows she had made would not permit her to spare herself ; and renouncing a pride she thought ill suited the penitent Adelaide, she sent the Marchioness's notice, she would see her as soon as she pleased to come to the Abbey : Madame de Cressy was too desirous of this interview to delay it ; she went to Chelles, and was shewn into a parlour, where she did not wait long before Adelaide appeared. Her veil was up, and the emotion she was in animated her complexion ;



ion ; the Marchioness thought her lovelier in this habit than she had ever beheld her ; the remembrance of the occasion of her assuming it melted her, she could not restrain a few tears as she saluted her. The amiable nun, with a smile full of sweetness and tranquillity, endeavoured to convince her, that her condition ought not to inspire so much sadness.

THEIR conversation at first was very languishing ; but Madame de Cressy assuring her, that she had sincerely regretted the way of life she had made choice of.—All is now over, Madame, all is past and forgotten, said the young recluse ; the time I spent in the world is already banished from my thoughts. But, resumed the Marchioness, how could you believe that I had any opinion of you that was false and injurious ? That

reproach affected me deeply ; I loved you tenderly, you knew I did ; and I dare assure you my heart has never changed. I believe it, Madame, I believe it, interrupted Adelaide, I do not, I ought not to complain, I respect the decrees of God, and bless those methods he has taken to warn me to seek in him only for that happiness which without doubt he never destined me to find in the world. Alas, said Madame de Cressy, the pleasures that the world offers us are mixed with a cruel alloy ! But, Madame, since you have desired I might be assured of your forgiveness, you surely believe you have reason to complain of me. Adelaide blushed at these words, cast down her eyes, and remained silent. Why will you not inform me, said the Marchioness, what injury I have done you ? What, Madame, said Adelaide at last, you have then seen that letter with which I reproach myself ;

self; I am not yet certain of the motives that engaged me to write it, but I doubt not I did wrong, since I see I have given you uneasiness. Ah, cried the Marchioness, why did I not know your heart when I might have conquered the propensity of mine! Why did you prefer Madame de Gerfay to me? Your confidence had stopped the progress of my inclinations; you would have been happy, and I should have beheld your felicity without envy. Madame de Gerfay never knew my secret, returned Adelaide; I was a stranger to your sentiments, and when chance discovered them to me, mine could no longer have made me happy; but let us speak of this no more, let us never speak of it. Ah, why, said Madame de Cressy; permit me to insist to demand of you, how my conduct or my conversation have hurt you?—Since you force me to speak, returned Adelaide, I

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believed I was intitled to complain of Madame de Raifel, since I learnt from herself, that she accused me of having given proofs of a shameful passion, and thought me unworthy the addresses of a man she advised to seek for happiness from a more deserving object. Me, cried the Marchioness; could I say—I do not comprehend you;—to whom did I say so?—Who has told you this horrid untruth?—Your own letter explained it without reserve.—What letter?—That you wrote to M. de Cressy, in which—but once more let us drop this subject; that time is forgotten, at least it ought to be: I cannot recal without pain the contempt you expressed for a person who had done nothing to inspire you with it; but believe me, Madame, this recollection is free from any resentment against you. How you embarrass me, said the Marchioness! I remember to  
have

have spoke of Madame d'Elmonte in such terms as these you mention ; but I neither understand the cause of your displeasure, nor how the letter wherein I mentioned her could have fallen into your hands, as I knew nothing of your inclination for M. de Cressy till long after your departure for Gersey. Adelaide was so closely pressed she could no longer refuse to explain herself ; she gave the Marchioness a detail that was but too exact ; and concluded by giving her reason to believe it was she who had informed M. de Cressy that Madame de Raifel was his unknown correspondent. Adelaide's narration, so conformable in facts, but so different in circumstances from that the Marquis had given her, discovered at once to Madame de Cressy, all the falshood of her husband, and gave her the bitterest grief. She opened her heart to Adelaide, who min-

gled tears with those she saw her shed. The Marchioness's fate seemed to her still more deplorable than that which had confined her in a cloister. They took leave of each other with all the marks of a tender friendship; and the charming recluse rejoiced she had never tasted a happiness, which one moment might have changed into the deepest distress: She lamented her whose felicity she had envied; and sheltered for ever from those cruel storms that tore the Marchioness's heart, she congratulated herself on the happy choice she had made.

MADAME de Cressy returned to Paris in a profound melancholy, which reflexion only increased, and which nothing could dissipate. A thousand times she repented she had ever sought this fatal explication; the tender passion of M. de Cressy, that secret love which  
 had



had made him sacrifice Adelaide to the hopes of one day possessing Madame de Raifel, that pleasure she felt in reflecting that there was a time when he adored her, in hoping it might yet return, all was swallowed up in the dreadful certainty of having been deceived. She saw in the Marquis a proud man, whom interest and ambition guided, who had preferred her only for the splendor of her fortune. Those tender caresses, those flattering transports she had so often pleased herself with having excited, even the joy he seemed to feel in them, all was false ; she did not even enjoy the satisfaction of imagining his transports had been ever real, or that his happiness had for one moment depended on her will : She thought the neglect he had shewn her was natural to him ; she imagined he was so far from conquering his desires at present, he

he only abandoned himself to his inclination, and indulged his newer desires, or his more agreeable fancies. What had once been the charm of her life, was now regarded only as a fantastic dream, from which it was dreadful to awake. But why had the Marquis wept at her feet? Did his tears flow from remorse? Of what importance was this? It was not from love; it was not the return of a heart that had once been hers; M. de Cressy was not possessed of those virtues she had loved in him; the object of her admiration merited only her indifference or her contempt; the moment she made this sad discovery was the last of her repose.

MADAME de Cressy could not conceal her visit to Adelaide from Mademoiselle de Berneil; but in acquainting her, that what she had heard from her had greatly affected her, she  
had

had not mentioned what that information was. She wished not to lessen M. de Cressy's character, and far from discovering his vices to the eyes of others, wished it were possible to hide them from her own.

HORTENSIA could not but know she had been on the point of being sacrificed ; she returned with a heart full of resentment, which her just suspicions could not but increase ; she concluded she would lose M. de Cressy if he again felt that returning fondness for the Marchioness, which embellishes all the charms of the object that inspires it, re-animates the fire of love, and restores to it its first ardour ; she could not bear the thoughts of losing her power, and feared to become the victim of a tender reconciliation.

M. DE Cressy was not more at ease ; disgusted with the haughtiness of Mademoiselle  
de

de Berneil, wearied with a commerce into which the love of pleasure only had engaged him, he was busied during Madame de Cressy's absence, in contriving how to get free from Hortensia without betraying her secret, which he could not resolve to acquaint the Marchioness with ; he was sensible of the imprudence he had almost committed, and would not expose Mademoiselle de Berneil to the resentment of a woman who had so much cause to hate her ; he was preparing himself to manage this affair with all the delicacy it required, when the return of the one and the other quite changed the disposition of his mind. Hortensia assumed all the haughtiness of a girl who believes herself offended : The melancholy air of the Marchioness, and the visit she had made at Chelles, made him apprehensive she was too well instructed for their common happiness. This fear shut his heart



heart against the tender sentiments that inclined him towards her : He avoided Hortensia, and shunned an explanation with the Marchioness : He could not look on two women who loved him, without discovering in their faces the appearance of reproach ; he sought in the world for those amusements he had once found at home : His house by degrees became disgustful to him, and it was not long before he gave over appearing there.

THOUGH Madame de Cressy no longer beheld him with those emotions she had once felt, she could not support the pain his absence gave her : Nothing could accustom her to it ; that house once so delightful to her, seemed now a frightful desert, since she no longer beheld there the dear cause of all her inquietudes.

MADAME

MADAME d'Elmonte, whom other affairs had engaged, seemed to have forgot the inclination she had for M. de Cressy ; but seeing him begin to appear again in the world with an air of discontent and indifference, that seemed to indicate the violent fondness he had pretended for his wife was on the decline, or perhaps already extinguished, she was desirous to try if he would yet resist her advances.

THE inclination she had for him was without jealousy and without delicacy, and every time was equally proper to renew and satisfy it.

THE interest she began to take in M. de Cressy made her desirous to know how his affairs stood at home ; and as it easy with the assistance of money and servants to discover every thing of this kind, if one can be mean enough to employ such low methods to get  
at

at the secrets of others, Madame d'Elmonte was soon informed of Hortensia's intrigue with the Marquis, their place of rendezvous, and the coldness that actually subsisted between them.

CHARMED with these discoveries, she believed herself sure of the Marquis ; and changing the plan of her attacks, by shewing him she was acquainted with all that passed in his mind, she discovered only sentiments of friendship and regard : By this conduct she excited his curiosity ; he could not imagine how she had found out a secret he believed himself master of. The desire he had to be informed of this engaged him to see her, and attach himself to her. The able Madame d'Elmonte gave him to understand, there were persons it was impossible to forget we had been once acquainted with ; the  
events

events of whose life could never be indifferent ; who we love to think of, and to observe the impulses of their heart, without even hoping to be one day the arbiter of them.

THE men accuse us of believing every thing that flatters our vanity ; but what vanity can equal theirs on this point ? M. de Cressy was persuaded Madame d'Elmonte had always loved him ; he took her coquetry, and the bold attempts it had inspired, for the violence of a passion she was not able to restrain : He admired her constancy ; he thought gratitude due to a tenderness no time had been able to destroy ; and whether by choice, by complaisance, or merely to pass the time, he gave himself up to this new amusement. This intrigue soon blazed in the eyes of the world, with all the indecency with which

Madame



Madame d'Elmonte was pleased to distinguish her caprices.

WHEN Mademoiselle de Berneil was convinced Madame d'Elmonte supplied her place in M. de Cressy's heart, she could not conceal all the marks of the most violent rage ; she contrived to meet with him, and loaded him with reproaches ; but far from regaining his heart by her outrageous passion, she deprived herself for ever of it, and had the mortification to see herself totally abandoned.

HE who a few months before had placed all his happiness in pleasing her, now gave her up without remorse to tears, regret, and shame, more difficult to bear than misfortune. Mademoiselle de Berneil had failed in what she owed to gratitude, to friendship, to duty,

HE

and

and to herself: But had M. de Cressy done her no injury? Is nothing due to a woman one has loved, or pretended to love? With whatever levity the men may treat this subject, however common the contemptible custom of abusing the fondness and credulity of a woman, let a man of honour interrogate himself; let him consult truth and nature, and then let him say if there is any occasion upon which treachery and deceit can be permitted; if he has any right to call forth in our heart that latent sentiment which perhaps might have continued for ever undiscovered there, had he not animated it by his officious ardours, to fill the soul of her with sorrow afterwards, who partook his desires only to gratify them, and yielded only to make him happy.

How-

HOWEVER Mademoiselle de Berneil might be to blame, her situation at M. de Cressy's entitled her to respect ; the need she had of a retreat deserved the utmost regard ; was it for him to seduce a girl who lived under his protection ? Ought he afterwards to have used her with cruelty ? O ye who make so barbarous a return for the favours you receive, how dare you complain when they are refused you ?

IN the violence of her first transports Hortensia was tempted to discover all to Madame de Cressy, and to excite her resentment against a rival, and a perfidious husband, whose mortifying preference ought to disgust her : But what could she expect from this step ? The Marchioness was not formed to feel the furious transports of resentment ; and still less to make others dread the effect of them.

Hers was one of those tender hearts that turn their resentments against themselves, and devour their pains in secret.

It had received a wound no time could cure, and that became more and more painful every day ; but far from assuming that mortified air grief gives the countenance, she forced herself to appear composed ; and as she never spoke of M. de Cressy, nobody was officious enough to inform her of the ridicule to which he exposed himself.

One day when she was going to dine in the country, passing through one of the suburbs, her postillion gave a lash with his whip in the midst of a crowd of children, who were at play and stopped up the passage ; in their hurry to get out of the way, one of them fell amongst the horses feet.

Madame



Madame de Cressy, who saw this, gave a loud cry : They stopped in time, and the child was taken up without hurt. The Marchioness, alarmed at this accident, had come down from her coach, caused them to bring the child to her, and while she caressed the little innocent, was so affected, on thinking she had almost been the cause of its death, that she seemed ready to faint. The mother of the child, who had received some marks of her liberality, invited her into her house to recover her fright, and was officious in offering her all the assistance she could. The Marchioness accepted her proposal. The apartment this woman shewed her into, was furnished in so magnificent and expensive a taste, that Madame de Cressy was astonished how a person of her mean appearance came to be so lodged : The woman saw her sur-

prize, and acknowledged the house belonged to a lord of the court, who had ordered it to be furnished as she saw, and had hired it about a year ago to receive a young person he had married, notwithstanding her want of fortune, and whose marriage was still a secret. Madame de Cressy went afterwards into the garden, which consisted only of four thickets and a fine parterre of flowers. As she was stooping to pull one of them, she saw somewhat glittering on the ground ; she took notice of it to the woman who had followed her, and pointed to the place where it lay : The mistress of the house having taken it up, no sooner saw it was a seal than she discovered all the demonstrations of an extravagant joy ; she told the Marchioness it belonged to the nobleman she had mentioned ; that he had caused it to be carefully looked for, and seemed extremely uneasy when it could not be found.

found. Madame de Cressy, who thought a loss of this nature did not deserve so much concern, was curious to look at the seal; she took it, and hardly had she cast her eyes on it, than she turned pale: She knew the stone which was very rare; and her arms graven on it, left her no room to doubt to whom this house belonged. The idea of finding herself in a place whither he went to avoid her, and meet another, gave her so much inquietude, that in crossing the apartment to reach her coach, she was obliged to throw herself on a seat, and give vent to a flood of tears she could no longer restrain.

WHILE she was lamenting a discovery that made way for others still more disagreeable, Madame d'Elmonte, who was to sup a little beyond this in the same suburb, happening to pass the house, which she knew perfectly well,

and seeing a coach and several valets in the Cressy livery, concluded that the Marquis, in place of being at Versailles, as she had supposed, had made up his peace with Mademoiselle de Berneil, for whom she knew this house was hired, and was now actually with her: full of this idea, and not once reflecting he never went to this place with so numerous an attendance, she thought it would be extremely pleasing to surprize them together, and see what face Mademoiselle de Berneil would put on this adventure; she stopped her coach, and alighting, knocked herself at the door with a vivacity that never forsook her. It was opened, she entered; and never was surprize equal to that of these two persons, who so little expected to meet each other.

MADAME de Cressy no sooner beheld Madame d'Elmonte, than she concluded she had  
come



come thither to meet the Marquis; she was so frightened at the thoughts of seeing him, that she rose with precipitation, and was hurrying out; but her strength failed her, and she fell back on her seat, unable to pronounce a word. Madame d'Elmonte, whose lively imagination had been busy all this while, had the idea of an adventure in all its circumstances already in her brain; and speaking of what she supposed had happened; What Madame, says she, have you those baby fits? You are come here to surprise a dissembling traitor, and quarrel with your rival? But what! tears, despondency! ah, good God! who would have believed you so weak? But what has then happened? Where is the Marquis? What have you done with Hortensia? Is she sent back to her convent? What were the circumstances of your parting?

MADAME

MADAME de Cressy understood nothing of all this : Madame d'Elmonte's boldness disgusted her ; but the name of Hortensia introduced into these questions augmented her surprize ; she could not determine what to answer. By what accident, Madame, said she at last, do I see you here ? Why do I endeavour to pry into secrets I can have no sort of motive to intrust you with ? Why do you suppose Hortensia in a convent ? What reason can I have to part with my friend ? Does she know this house belongs to M. de Cressy ? Is it to her he intrusts such secrets ? And what am I to understand by your enquiring in what manner we parted ?

I CONFESS, said Madame d'Elmonte, you raise my admiration ; nothing can be more ridiculous than the tenderness you shew for the reputation of a girl that returns all your benefits with the blackest

blackest ingratitude ; who after having robbed you of your husband's heart, banishes him from your house with her ill humour. To pretend ignorance of her being the Marquis's mistress, to deny that you either found her here, or at least expected her, is surely Madame carrying your generosity as far as it can go.

MADAME de Cressy, displeased both with Madame d'Elmonte's discourse and manner, treated as scandal every thing she said of Mademoiselle de Berneil ; but Madame d'Elmonte, resolved to convince her she spoke only the truth, called the mistress of the house, who had retired ; and shewing her a box she had taken from M. de Cressy, she opened it, and by means of a spring, discovered a portrait hid under the lid, and ordered her to declare if that was not the picture of the young lady for whom her house had been taken : The woman, over-awed  
with

with Madame d'Elmonte's authoritative manner, confessed all.

WHAT a moment was this for Madame de Cressy ! Betrayed by the object of her love, and by that of her tenderest friendship, her misfortune discovered to her by a person who seemed to enjoy it, who took a pleasure in seeing her tears flow, a woman who she easily saw was conducted thither by a fit of jealousy, could any situation be more deplorable than hers !

SHE rose to go away ; and turning towards Madame d'Elmonte ! Ah ! Madame, said she, how could M. de Cressy make you the confidante of so odious an intrigue ? How could he sacrifice the object of it, and discover what so many reasons obliged him to conceal ? Ah, why did you discover to me so dreadful a secret ! At what price have you purchased it ?

Alas !



Alas, had any one told me an hour ago I was happy, I should have thought it a cruel irony ! yet I was so, when I compare what I then felt to what I suffer now. In ending these words she left this fatal house, and Madame d'Elmonte; assured that a woman so well acquainted with the Marquis, was not a simple confidante.

THE Marchioness believed she had already suffered all the pains that a tender passion, ill requited, can occasion; she thought that to be no more beloved, to be assured she had been deceived, were evils that could suffer no addition; she knew not the dreadful torments of a jealousy that leaves no room for doubt; she knew not what it was to be certain of the treachery of an ingrate, of the happiness of a rival, who enjoys our pains, whose pleasures we exaggerate, and paint her continually in the midst of delights which we regret, but  
do

do not hope ever to enjoy again : Ah, when an infidel returns to us anew, when he restores to us his heart, can he give us back that inexpressible charm attached to preference ! It has been said we pardon much to those we love ; but can we long love him whom we have need to pardon ?

MADAME de Cressy returned home, oppressed with a melancholy that deprived her of strength to support herself. She enquired if Mademoiselle de Berneil was there ; and being informed she was abroad, ordered one of her women not to allow her to enter her apartment when she returned. The joy the woman shewed on receiving this order, surprised the Marchioness ; she would know the reason of it, and understood, by what she said, nobody in the Hotel was ignorant of what had happened. Mademoiselle de Berneil was hated by Madame de Cressy's people,  
who

who were sincerely attached to their mistress ; they looked on Mademoiselle de Berneil as the cause of all that uneasiness she could not always conceal. This intelligence affected the Marchioness ; Just heaven ! cried she, is this the fruit of the union so much desired, which seemed to have raised me to the height of happiness, rejected by an ingrate, betrayed by her I so tenderly protected ! Unhappy in my family, am I an object of pity to my servants ? She recommended secrecy to the woman ; and too certain she had been the sport of two perfidious wretches, abandoned herself to all the bitterness of despair. Next day, though she found herself extremely bad, she set out early in the morning, accompanied only by two of her women, for an estate she had about ten leagues from Paris. It was here she considered her present situation, and her future prospects with attention.

THIS woman, so amiable, so admired, the happy possessor of whom excited so much envy, whose lot was so splendid before she knew M. de Cressy, at present, sunk with grief, saw nothing but misfortunes before her. That tenderness she could not extinguish, was now a source of despair. She tried to find some resource against the evils that oppressed her, from religion and philosophy ; but what can reason do against a passion that tyrannizes over us, that is interwoven with our being, that fills up and absorbs all our ideas ?

LIKE a young child, who, though surrounded by a thousand toys, has no pleasure but in one ; if this is taken from him, he weeps, cries, throws away or breaks in pieces all the rest ; our heart, fixed on one object it prefers, it dotes on, disdains every happiness besides.



besides. Ah, what is any happiness, compared to a love one believes mutual ? What can be expected from time, and the return of reason ? A melancholy languor, an insipid tranquillity, a frightful void, a thousand times more dreadful to a mind endued with sensibility, than all those bitter pains sentiment can make it feel.

NOTWITHSTANDING Madame d'Elmonte's want of consideration, she felt some regret at what had passed ; she spoke nothing of it to M. de Cressy. When he returned from Versailles he was informed the Marchioness was in the country. As she was building at that place, she was frequently there ; he was surprized Hortensia was not with her ; but gave no great attention to this novelty. Mademoiselle de Berneil was uneasy at it ; but the Marquis partook no more of her inquietudes.

MADAME de Cressy continued to reflect eight days in her solitude; at last she took the only resolution that to her seemed suited to put an end to her misfortune. For a long time she had seldom seen the Marquis; she was sensible she could see him with pleasure no more; her health declined every day; sleep was become a stranger to her; a black melancholy rendered every thing tiresome and disgustful; she resolved not to wait from a tedious decay for the end of a languishing life; she determined to abridge its course.

MADAME de Cressy returned to Paris; she received Madame de Bernail with coldness, and spoke to her without any marks of displeasure: She employed herself all the day in putting some papers in order, which she carefully sealed: She distributed presents amongst her women, and seemed pleased in making them choose what they loved best amongst the things

things she destined for them; she was not so sad as usual; the resolution she had taken calmed her heart, and gave freedom to her spirits; she gave Mademoiselle de Berneil a rich box; There, Mademoiselle, said she, presenting it to her, keep carefully this present, which I beg of you to accept; it will bring to your remembrance an event, that may force you to reflect, and perhaps awake in your heart those sentiments I wish you have not for ever lost; and making a sign that she desired no answer, continued her employment. When she had ended, she ordered the Marquis (at whatever hour he came home) might be told she desired to speak to him. At midnight she called for tea, it was brought, she sat down and poured a cup, into which she threw a powder, telling Mademoiselle de Berneil she had been assured it would procure her rest; she set it on the table to let it infuse. It was one o'clock when the Marquis came

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home,

home, he went immediately to Madame de Cressy's chamber, and found her talking quietly with Mademoiselle de Berneil. The Marchioness rose to receive him; Hortensia offered to withdraw, but she prevented her: Stay, Mademoiselle, said she, nothing will pass here you ought not to witness. Having seated herself, she begged M. de Cressy to fill up the cup she was yet to take, and reach it her, he did so; the Marchioness received it from his hands with a look full of meaning had he understood it, and told him she was charmed he had presented it to her. As she wanted to gain time, she spoke of several things that concerned him, and his affairs: Then making her watch strike, judged the time was far enough advanced. I am going to acquaint you, Monsieur, said she, why I wished to see and speak with you. Then taking a little china coffer that stood

near



near her, opened it, and having taken from it two sealed packets, gave one of them to Mademoiselle de Berneil: There, said she, Mademoiselle, is the accomplishment of the promise I made your mother when she committed you to my friendship, and intrusted your fortune to my care: I only obtained the order for your pension a little while ago, it is under that cover; what I have added to it, will put it in your power to live easily wherever you incline. I have nothing more to say to you; by conferring obligations on you I have deprived myself of the liberty of complaining of you. Then giving M. de Cressy the other packet, keep this, Monsieur, continued she, till you find yourself obliged to open it. Your complaisance gives me reason to expect you will conform yourself to my intentions; I never had any contrary to your interest, and the trifle I have disposed of will do you no injury.

M. DE Cressy, amazed at this language, fixed his eyes on her; he saw she expected an answer, and begged her to explain what she had said with all the eagerness of extreme inquietude. You are about to lose for ever, Monsieur, returned the Marchioness, a friend whose heart you never knew; I dare believe you would have used it with less severity, could you have judged of the sentiment that attached it to you. This friend has been deceived, neglected, abandoned, and betrayed by you; you have acted by her as if she had been no ways interested in you. I do not wish you to regret her so much as that the remembrance of her may disturb the tranquillity of your life; but I will not think so poorly of you as to believe her death, occasioned by yourself, will be altogether indifferent to you.

Then

HER death! O heavens! what have you said! Who, whose death! cried the Marquis, distracted with fear: Is it possible, Madame! — O, banish the dreadful suspicion that alarms me! Can you have——

MODERATE your transports, Monsieur, replied Madame de Cressy coldly, they cannot now impose on me; I know you too well, but I will not complain, all is over. I long believed all the happiness I enjoyed, and all the blessings that surrounded me, flowed from you; that illusion is fled, for ever fled; but from that hand once so dear, I have received what will terminate a life become useless, and even odious to me, since I am certain I can no longer make you happy.

M. DE Cressy heard not the conclusion of this speech, he had got up to seek for assistance;

assistance; his cries, his precipitate orders, his distress, his terror, hardly left him the use of reason: He threw himself into Madame de Cressy's arms, he pressed her in his, he conjured her to receive all the assistance he could procure her; she would accept of none; she endeavoured to compose him: Spare, said she to him, these useless cares; do not make a troublesome clamour; in a few moments I shall be no more, nothing can save me; I am certain nothing can.

WHAT have you done, cruel woman, cried the Marquis, melting into tears? How could you force me to give you?—Ah, what a revenge have you taken? Alas, do you know what banished me from you? Could the fear of having offended you too much prevent me? Why durst I not confide in your goodness?—And you who can support this dreadful

scene,



scene, said he, turning to Mademoiselle de Berneil, who was motionless with astonishment; can you appear before her with that barbarous tranquillity? Be gone, Madame, be gone: What business have you here? Ah, that you had never entered these doors.

WEAK as Madame de Cressy was, what the Marquis said affected her: Ah, do not mortify a girl already too unhappy, said she to him; do not add to the reproaches she ought to make herself; you have punished her enough. I forgive you both; forgive me, the pains I now occasion you. Compose yourself, do not take from me the sweet consolation of believing that I leave you happy. The people the Marquis had sent for now entered; the Marchioness yielded to his pressing intreaties; she took what he presented to her, but all was ineffectual. He clasped her

in

In his arms, he bathed her with tears; he could not give up the hopes of recovering her. Live, Madame, said he, live to find in me a friend, a lover, a husband who adores you. His caresses, and passionate expressions, re-animated Madame de Cressy, a lively colour banished her paleness; her sweet and charming features resumed all their lustre; joy sparkled from her eyes. I die content, said she, since I die in your arms, honoured by your sorrows, and bathed with your tears. Ah, fold me, fold me in these arms, once the temple of bliss to the poor unfortunate who could not live and see herself banished from them. Let me expire on that dear bosom; may it open and receive my parting soul! She now lost all sensation; nothing could recover her from the stupor into which she had fallen, and soon after she slept the sleep of death.

THEY

THEY were obliged to force from M. de Cressy's arms all that now remained of a woman so amiable, and so worthy of his love, from whom he would not separate when all his tenderness was useless to her. They forced him from her, and from this scene of death it was necessary to watch him to preserve him from the effects of his fury. A dangerous fever and violent transports brought him to the gates of the tomb; he raved, and during his delirium called out to save him from two furies who tore the Marchioness's heart and his. Restored to himself, and his health re-established, he never saw again Hortensia, nor Madame d'Elmonte; the one forgot him, the other returned to her retreat to deplore a friend she could never forget, and weep over crimes she could never pardon herself.

M. DE

M. DE Cressy could not be consoled ; Adelaide sacrificed for his sake, Madame de Raissel dead in his arms, were for ever present to his thoughts, and imbittered all the remainder of his life.

He was great, he was distinguished ; he obtained all the titles and all the honours he had desired ; he was rich, he was exalted, but he was not happy.

E N D.